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In Dheisheh
Entrances Closed, Settlers 'Bait' Camp

Eight entrances to Dheisheh refugee camp were sealed October 4 by the military government following a spree of rock throwing at passing Israeli vehicles and intense lobbying by settlers to that effect. Radio Israeli reported October 9 that settlers in the Hebron area were given the go ahead by defence minister Yitzhak Rabin to run patrols on the road in front of the camp to thwart any attempt by camp youths to stone passing vehicles.

The recent closure, which comes following a three-day curfew imposed on the camp in the wake of a rock attack at an Israeli car in which one woman was injured, left only two entrances open — one for cars and the other partially open for pedestrians. The camp originally had 20 entrances. The other 10 have been closed over the past three years.

The radio said the settler patrols will be made in groups of four private cars from Gush Etzion, Hebron and Kiryat Arba. The settlers claim their action is "pre-emptive" against stone-throwing. Local observers saw the action, however, as "baiting" Dheisheh residents, and then moving in to make arbitrary arrests. Israel radio said that so far a 50-person strong vigilante force has been established. The settlers had met the week before with Rabin and demanded that harsh measures be taken against the Palestinian residents of Dheisheh to put an end to interference with Israeli traffic on the main road that links Jerusalem and Hebron.

Al Ittihad newspaper quoted residents of the refugee camp October 5 as expressing worry that closure of the entrances would make it difficult for them to reach their destinations. They said they would have to make long detours to reach water sources, clinics, shops and schools that are located near the entrances. It also said that 40 camp residents were rounded up by the military and interrogated. (Translation: Al Ittihad, October 5, Al Fajr, October 5, and Al Mithaq October 10).

Israeli soldiers gently escort settlers out of Dheisheh refugee camp October 5 after they stormed the camp.

In Taibeh
Police Break In, Kahane Stays Out

Several villagers were injured and 16 youths arrested October 9 in the Triangle Arab village of Taibeh when police attacked residents who came out en masse to confront a planned entry into the village by MK Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Taibeh village council called a general strike in the village on the day of the proposed visit to protest another in a series of attempts by Kahane to push Arabs out of their homes and country.

The one-day strike was fully observed in the village and the local population gathered at the village entrance in case Kahane decided to show up. Kahane had earlier cancelled plans, however, to visit Taibeh because the High Court had not yet ruled on the legality of his visit.

According to Taibeh council head, Abd al-Latif Habib, the strike was scheduled to end at 4 pm. He said the people were getting ready to return to their homes when police intervened "without being provoked in any way" and began to make arrests and beat youths. Habib said when he heard of the police intervention he rushed to the scene "and strongly protested the police action." He strongly denied police reports that stones were thrown at them and said, "No resident even got close to the main road where the police were stationed." He said the only incident of any police being

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Bank of Mixed Blessings to Open in Nablus

Israeli officials have given permission to a group of prominent Nablus businessmen to open an independent bank in the occupied territories to deal in Jordanian currency.

The move is regarded by some local observers as a political manoeuvre by the new Labour government to make cosmetic improvements in the life of Palestinians in the occupied territories by rewarding pro-Jordanian business and financial circles.

Israeli papers commented that the move is part of Shimon Peres's "gestures" to the population of the West Bank in accordance with earlier requests by US officials. US Secretary of State George Shultz had publicly called for the "improvement of the living conditions" of Palestinians living in the occupied territories. Thus the move must be seen within the context of Peres's visit to the US and the expected request of additional US financial aid to bail out the Israeli economy.

Other so-called "good gestures" announced by the Peres government this week were the early reopening of Najah University which was punitively closed in August for four months, raising the restrictions on money brought by travellers across the Jordan bridges to US $5000, licensing a cement factory and a hospital, and reducing the number of censored books to 300. Israeli defence minister Yitzhak Rabin also pledged to replace Israeli military officers now running the municipalities with appointed Arabs. Palestinian nationalists are calling for the reinstallation of the elected mayors who were dismissed by the military in 1982.

Zhafer Masri, head of the Nablus chamber of commerce, told *Al Fajr* that a number of Nablus merchants had requested permission to open a bank six months ago and that he and others have been using every opportunity they had to pressure the Israelis into accepting. "We have raised the issue with foreign diplomats and representatives in every meeting we had with them," he said. Masri pointed out that details for the bank's operation have not been worked out but that basic principles requested by the Nablus businessmen have been approved. These conditions include the bank be allowed to deal with the Jordanian dinar, the legal tender in the West Bank, and that it be independent of the Israeli monetary system. The initial Israeli agreement stipulated that the bank must operate with local investment and have a financial base of not less than JD1 million.

Masri, who was deputy mayor in the Shaka'a municipal council before it was dismissed by the military, said the bank will be allowed to transfer funds to and from banks in the Arab world and to have branches throughout the West Bank. Masri said that they also plan to have a branch in East Jerusalem. Israel may not approve a Jerusalem branch since it does not consider Jerusalem part of the West Bank. Jawad Kamal, head of the closed Arab Bank's Nablus branch before 1967, told *Al Fajr* that the question of Jerusalem was the main reason why earlier negotiations between the Arab Bank and Israeli officials failed.

Spokesman for Israeli defence minister Yitzhaq Rabin told reporters that the bank had been approved and that the present Israeli government was hoping that the bank would open "sooner rather than later." He said that further negotiations will be carried out through the West Bank military commander but that the government-controlled Bank of Israel will issue the license for the bank.

Since 1967 all banks operating in the West Bank and Gaza were closed by virtue of military orders 7 and 194. In 1981 a branch of the Bank of Palestine in Gaza was allowed to be opened in response to Egyptian pressures. The bank has not been allowed to deal with foreign currency nor open other branches. As a result it has not affected the local economy.

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Commando Unit Killed in Jordan Valley

Three Palestinian commandos were killed October 5 during a battle with an Israeli army unit in the Jordan Valley, an Israeli military spokesman claimed. One Israeli soldier was reportedly wounded in the battle.

No Palestinian organisation claimed responsibility for the commando unit and details on where the unit originated from or where the bodies of the three commandos were buried were not given.

Israel radio reported October 7 that a powerful explosive device was discovered in a metal pipe placed on the roadside in the Jordan Valley. The bomb was safely diffused, according to the radio. It is not yet known whether the bomb was planted by the same commando unit or not.

The Palestinian commandos were discovered October 5 at midnight near the village of Ma'ayer by an Israeli army squadron which attacked them with light artillery for several minutes, according to an army spokesman. Three Kalashnikov assault rifles, a Scorpion submachine gun, four pistols, grenades, ammunition, explosives, food, medical supplies, maps of the West Bank and thousands of Jordanian dinars were allegedly found in the unit's possession which Israeli army officials prominently displayed for journalists.

The Jerusalem Post quoted military sources October 7 as saying, "It is not clear whether the three (commandos) infiltrated from Jordan or whether they are local residents." The newspaper quoted the sources as adding that "even if the 'gang' had infiltrated from Jordan, the army does not see this as a change in policy on the part of the Jordanians." The paper was referring to Jordan's policy which prohibits any Palestinian commando operation against Israel to be launched from Jordanian territory. Jordan has kept this policy since the 1970 September war between Jordan's King Hussein army and PLO forces. (Translation: Al Fajr, Al Quds, and the Jerusalem Post, October 7)

Jnaid Prisoners Suspend Strike

Palestinian prisoners at Jnaid prison in Nablus suspended their hunger strike October 4 after Israeli police minister Haim Bar Lev visited the new prison and promised to improve prison conditions.

Eleven days into the open hunger strike by over 600 prisoners, prison authorities pledged immediate approval for providing prisoners with pajamas and transistor radios both to be bought by prisoners themselves, and bed sheets. Long term improvements, according to Bar Lev's recommendations, are to be made to alleviate the severe overcrowding in the prison cells. Prison authorities refused to meet one of the prisoners' demands, the removal of asbestos boards blocking windows, claiming "Security reasons."

Striking prisoners also received a letter October 8 from the Israeli police minister thanking them for their decision to suspend the strike.

Prisoners at Jnaid told families and lawyers who met them during the week that prison authorities guaranteed that they would "not use violence or teargas against prisoners."

The Lawyers Committee, set up to defend the protesting prisoners, will monitor promised improvements and follow the matter up with the Israeli police minister.

In New York, the United Nations accepted October 7 a letter from Palestinian prisoners at Jnaid as an official document. The 10-page letter delivered by the PLO's observer at the UN, Zuhdi Tarazi, and addressed to UN General Secretary Javier Peres de Cuellar, reported on prison conditions and carried the demands of the prisoners and an appeal for the UN to intervene for better conditions.

Israel Gets Another Handout from US

The US and Israel entered into a tighter economic embrace this week after US president Ronald Reagan promised visiting Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres that Washington would pump free dollars into Israel's foreign reserves. Almost half of Israel's mammoth US$2.6 billion aid package, just passed by Congress, will be transferred to Israel in one lump sum in the next few weeks to feed Israel's dollar-hungry economy.

Peres told reporters October 9 that the US put no political strings on the aid, neither with regard to Lebanon nor the West Bank.

Other US commitments to forestall the economic crash of its number one ally were announced by Reagan in a White House Rose Garden ceremony with Peres at his side. Reagan announced the formation of a joint US-Israeli economic committee to make recommendations for additional US-to-Israel aid, trade and private investment. Peres said that he and secretary of state Shultz agreed to three separate commissions from the government and private sector to discuss Israeli economic recovery.

Peres refused to reveal to journalists any specific sum for future assistance or to discuss the nature of "additional promises" which he said Reagan made to him privately.

Most of the remaining aid package for 1984-85 — US$1.4 billion — will be given to Israel in the form of military arms and equipment, and some for local production of the controversial Lavi warplane. Peres said no US official suggested Israel curtail its defence budget.

Peres also said Reagan and Shultz had responded "very positively" to the Labour Party's much advertised "good gesture" policy toward the occupied West Bank and Gaza. The feeble gestures are aimed at business and intellectual circles, such as the opening of a bank in Nablus, the early opening of Najah University, which was closed by the military for four months in August, the opening of a medical centre, and the reactivation of municipalities by the appointment of prominent business elements. Palestinians are now also permitted to return to the West Bank with a maximum of JD2000 in their pockets, up from the JD1000 limit set by the Likud.

Reagan used the opportunity of Peres' visit to reaffirm his commitment to his own peace plan, put forth in September 1982. There was no mention of Israeli settlements or guarantees that the cash gift from the US would not be used in settlement construction. None of Labour's "good gestures" involves redirecting any US money to Palestinians in the occupied territories.

THIS WEEK'S CENSORSHIP

Following is a breakdown of censorship cuts for issue 232, October 12, 1984:

Number of original articles submitted to censors 10
Number of articles totally censored out 3
Number of articles mutilated beyond use 1
Number of articles partially censored but used 1
Number of articles passed 5

Cover - Up Revealed in Jewish Terror Trial

An alleged cover-up by police and the Israeli General Security Services (GSS) of an investigation into the June 1980 car bomb attack on West Bank mayors was brought forth in the trial of 20 members of the Jewish terrorist organisation October 7.

The allegations, part of the mini-trial into the admissibility of defendant's confessions made to the GSS, were later ruled as "irrelevant at this stage of the proceedings" by judges led by president of the bench Judge Ya'akov Bazak, according to a *Jerusalem Post* report.

Before being ruled "irrelevant" however, Aryeh Weinot, lawyer for accused Nathan Nathanson, presented the Jerusalem district court with a police memorandum concerning the interrogation of one of the accused, Ira Rappaport.

Rappaport was interogated by Nablus police after he allegedly attempted to run down a policeman in the city. During questioning he suddenly refused to give any further comment because the investigator, he said, "is trying to link me and my car to the mayor's episode. I deny any connection and any knowledge of it. I won't say more without seeing a lawyer."

Rappaport's curious statement was filed but not investigated. He was not questioned further that day. Rappaport is now a fugitive in the US.

In testimony given *in camera* by GSS agents October 9, it was discovered that some of the terror defendants had also allegedly attempted to plant bombs in the cars of two other prominent Palestinians. A GSS agent nicknamed "Gadi" testified that Yitzhak Ganiram, one of the accused, confessed that some of the terrorists had tried to boobytrap the cars of Ibrahim Dakkak and Dr. Ahmad Hamzeh Natshe.

Another defendant, Boaz Heineman, gave the GSS agent information about explosives prepared for use against al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Heineman said the charges were hidden in Kfar Avraham and that two defendants practised with them in Netanya where they were briefly detained as "vagrants."

Israeli intelligence agents examine weapons caches confiscated from Jews in the terror organisation.

Israeli Army Reels in Stolen Weaponry

"US $250 million worth of military equipment is missing," Haim Eraz, Israeli quartermaster general revealed in a September 30 meeting with military reporters. Anyone in possession of stolen military goods will be able to return it, no questions asked, during the month of October, according to an October 1 report in *Yediot Aharonot*.

The sum of US $250 million is the result of three years of thievery among soldiers, according to the supplies chief. The Lebanon war, he said, has already cost the army US $140 million in stolen equipment. "Among the missing items are 320 Galil rifles, 229 M-16 machine guns, 429 Uzi sub-machine guns, 604 assorted machine guns, several bazookas, 45 mine throwers and more."

Stiff penalties, including prison sentences, will be levied against anyone caught with stolen military equipment after October.

The Jerusalem Post reported October 8 that the first week of the October recover operation had already netted a large supply of army equipment. Returned equipment included 5,000 hand grenades, seven rocket-propelled grenades, two Maag machine guns, a 52 mm mortar and 40 Kalashnikov assault rifles. Other munitions returned included three M-16 rifles, three Galil rifles, eight Uzi submachine guns, one Mauser and three Karl-Gustav submachine guns, 10 pistols, seven air rifles, ammunition, explosives and fuses. Other items ranging from field glasses to first-aid kits were also returned.

BZU Closes Over Student Fee Protest

Bir Zeit University has been effectively closed since October 6 due to a dispute between students and administration over a fee hike for first-year students. The student council called a strike from October 6 to 10, and school administration closed the school October 11.

BZU's board of trustees raised the yearly fees for first-year students in the college of arts from JD140-180 and in the college of sciences from JD150 to 200.

The BZU student council declared a strike October 6 and began holding negotiations with university administration. No compromise was reached however. On October 11, after a student council statement in the local press asking students to be present on campus failed to produce tangible results, the university administration reacted to the student move by sending employees and faculty home, thereby effectively closing the university.

The student council issued a statement October 6 protesting the fee hike which they said was unilateral action on the part of the university's board of trustees. The council ask students to pay a minimum of JD50 until a final agreement was reached.

Gabi Baramki, acting president of the university, told *Al Fajr* he didn't see any reason for the student's protest. He said the university looks into all applications for assistance by needy students "seventy percent of the students get some kind of financial assistance," he said.

Baramki called the student protest "an attempt to reduce the fees only for those able, since all others get reduced fees." The university president said the fees represent less than 20 percent of what it actually costs the university for each student and that "outsiders are willing to help if we show that we are helping ourselves." He said that "it is time able Palestinians living here bear some of the responsibility for their future."

Inflation, Taxes Swallow Teachers' Increases

The General Committee of Government School Teachers (GCGST) sent a letter of sharp protest to the Israeli education liaison officer in Beit El occupation headquarters October 9 expressing the West Bank teachers' rejection of heavy taxations and the lack of real increase in pay slips for September.

The letter gave three examples explaining the ineffectiveness of the 13 percent increase in teachers' salaries.

GCGST members explained that the average income of teachers is IS100,000, less than half of what the Israeli bureau of statistics has determined that a six-member family needs to cover basic expenses. The teachers asked the Israeli liaison officer to seriously deal with their economic problems. "A real salary increase must be made and the cancellation of taxation must be implemented," the letter stated.

One GCGST member told Al Fajr the low salaries have been a problem for years. The constant devaluation of the shekel also causes the sharp deterioration of teachers' salaries. The committee member, who refused to be identified in print, added, "We have been demanding a solution to this troublesome problem but we never received a positive response. A study comparing teachers' salaries in West Bank government, private, UNRWA and Israeli schools was made several months ago showing that the West Bank government school teachers receive drastically lower salaries.

Teachers rank	years of service	salary in August	salary in September
5	28	IS131,000	IS111,000
6	18	IS109,000	IS109,000
8	6	IS96,000	IS99,000

Yom Kippur Closes Roads to Gaza, W.B

In one of Peres' "good gestures" to the West Bank populace, all Arab traffic was banned from entering Arab neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem during the Yom Kippur fast. October 5 Some traffic was stopped between Arab cities as well.

Several Palestinians travelling on the main Jerusalem-Ramallah road found themselves stranded October 5 when the road was closed at sunset to through traffic. An army checkpoint was set up near French Hill, a suburb of Jerusalem, and all Jerusalem-bound traffic was ordered back. People travelling to Jerusalem were left in confusion, trying to map out an alternate route. This is the first time since the 1967 occupation that traffic to East Jerusalem from the north was interrupted without clear notice.

Traffic inside Israel usually comes to a standstill for 24 hours during the Day of Atonement holiday, but traffic between Arab cities, unless separated by Jewish settlements, has never before been affected. One UNRWA administrator commented that the closure of the road to East Jerusalem was "an obvious harassment."

A Gaza bus carrying a wedding party of 40 was ordered back as it was heading home after a wedding in a West Bank village. The bus arrived at the last checkpoint before Gaza near Latrun village 15 minutes before the roads were scheduled to be closed. It was ordered back

BANK

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Palestinian residents dealing with Israeli banks have concentrated mostly on deposit and immediate withdrawal transactions with little money being kept in current accounts. Few Bank loans have been given.

Haidar Husseini, the Jerusalem representative of the Arab Bank in Amman, told *Al Fajr* that the proposed bank will benefit Israel on both the political and economic levels. He said that the bank will give Israel an image that it is helping Palestinians but in reality it will be nothing more than a cosmetic improvement. Husseini explained that any bank which opened in the occupied territories will automatically be under the supervision of the Bank of Israel which grants the license. The daily regulations of the Bank of Israel will have to be followed and the Israeli authorities will have an excellent opportunity to monitor the financial transactions of Palestinians. The Jerusalem banker said that the bank would be a morale boost to local Palestinians, but in practice would be no different than Israeli banks. Any new bank would have to maintain ties with an Israeli bank which would act as a clearing agent.

Attempts in the early 1970's by representatives of the Arab Bank to have their West Bank branches reopened all ended in failure. According to Palestinian sources the Arab Bank insisted that it be directly tied to Amman headquarters and later, as a compromise, to have the West Bank branches tied to the Bank's Switzerland office. Both plans were rejected by the Israeli ruling Labour Party at that time.

Haidar Husseini told *Al Fajr* that most banks which operated in the area before 1967 and were closed by the Israeli occupation have considerable investments in the Arab states and especially in the Gulf. There would be little financial gain, yet much to lose, through compromising with Israeli authorities on conditions for setting up a bank in the occupied territories.

Ibrahim Abd al-Hadi, owner of the Nablus-based Arab Insurance Company, who is involved in the bank deal, told *Al Fajr* that the proposed bank will have no direct connection whatsoever with any financial organisation outside the occupied territories. He said that the bank will operate according to existing Jordanian laws with the Bank of Israel acting in the stead of the Jordanian central bank. Abd al-Hadi said that authorities will only be allowed to check into the accounts of any local bank customers if they possess a court order to do so.

Jabalya Youth Injured From Soldier Fire

One Jabalya youth was wounded and five more arrested October 10 when a gathering of camp residents came under fire from Israeli soldiers who accompained bulldozers on a mission to demolish a home in the camp, Israel television reported.

The camp residents attempted to block the bulldozers from demolishing the house when the soldiers, numbering about 100, opened fire on them. The television report claimed the camp residents stoned the bulldozers and soldiers prompting the soldiers to open fire. It also alleged that the injured man was hit when he refused to yield to calls by the soldiers to stop and then attempted to run away.

The house was ordered demolished for allegedly building without a licence.

Nablus Family Saved from Triple Jeopardy

Israeli High Court issued an order *nisi* October 7 barring the Israeli military commander from destroying, sealing or confiscating a house owned by the Najjar family from Buren south of Nablus. The family fears military action against them following a search by army investigators who reportedly discovered weapons in the courtyard of the Najjar home two days after the arrest of their son.

Langer obtained the order *nisi* from Judge A. Goldberg. She is planning to ask to have her client, Nidal, released on bail.

Eldest son Bilal found murdered by a Nablus road March 27.

Moslems Protest Desecration In Mosque

The Islamic Higher Council in Jerusalem protested new Israeli desecrations in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. In a protest letter to Israel's defence minister Yitzhaq Rabin the Council outlined five Israeli violations of the sanctity of the mosque, one of Islam's holiest shrines. The massive mosque is the site of the Tomb of the Patriarchs, respected by Muslims, Jews and Christians.

* On September 11, the letter said, metal steps were built leading to a military observation post within the mosque compound.

* On September 20 closed circuit TV cameras were installed inside the mosque on the pretext of watching for actions by "extremists" on Jewish and Moslem sides.

* On Friday, September 28 for the first time since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank, Muslims were banned from praying in a large section of the mosque. The ban was issued to make room for Jewish worshippers who are gradually taking over the mosque.

* Early September 25 an Arab guard in the mosque, Ismael Hashlamoun, was beaten by a settler, the letter said. It added that Hashlamoun was also beaten at the police station by other settlers. Police made no attempt to stop them. Hashlamoun filed suit against the police but found out that he is the one who is to face trial.

* On October 1, a circumcision party was held at the mosque for the son of an Israeli army officer. The party was attended by several high-ranking Israeli military officers and drinks and food were served, according to the letter.

TAIBEH

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hurt was "when one of them tripped on a wire and fell."

Taibeh village council held an emergency meeting following the police attack on citizens and decided to send a protest letter to chief of police, Haim Bar Lev. The council also decided to bear the court expenses of the arrested youths. Only eight of the 16 were remanded, all for eight days, by a Kfar Saba magistrate court. The other eight youths were released the same night because of their young age, according to Habib.

Al-Ittihad Arabic daily reported October 11 that the arrested youths had been beaten while in detention. It said the youths' lawyer reported seeing dry blood stains on their shirts. The paper quoted one of the lawyers, Abd al-Jawad Yehiya, as saying that the remand was probably an attempt by police to "extract confessions from the youths of the charges filed against them which include illegal gathering and endangering the lives of others." Yehiya complained that there was no need to keep the youths in detention since they had already given their statements to police. The judge ruled, however, that because of "arrival of the holidays" it was necessary to extend the youths' detention according to *Al Ittihad*. The Jewish holiday of *Succot* began October 11.

18 New Banned Books

Two separate book banning orders issued on May 23 and August 27 by military authorities but just made public ban 18 books from distribution in the West Bank. The orders (identified as adjustments number 67 and 68 to the 1945 Emergency Defence Regulations) state the banning is necessary "for the security of the area and public order." The banned books are:

Hearts Painted Blue Muna Qattan (Egyptian Committee for Public Books, 1975)

Panorama of the Modern Arab Novel Sayed Hamed Nasaj (Dar al-Maaref, Cairo 1980)

Islamic State Ayatollah Khomeni (Dar al-Taliah Publishers, Beirut, 1979)

Chemical and Germ Weaponry Nabil Subhi (Al-Risaleh Institute, 1983)

Al-Mutanabi and Children Suleiman Issa (Children's Cultural House, Iraq)

Opinions in the Strategic War and Men of Leadership Akram Duri (Arab Studies and Publishing Centre, 1981)

Backwardness of the Arabs and the Third World Ghalib Arabiat (Arab Studies and Publishing House, Beirut 1983)

Voices Imad al-Din Khalil (Dar al-Furkan Publishing House, Amman, 1982)

This is How the Story Ends... How It Begins Fadel Naquib (Arab Studies and Publishing House, 1983)

Plans for Solving the Palestinian Problem Between 1947-1983 Munir Hor and Tareq Mussa (Arab Studies and Publishing House, Beirut, 1983)

Lectures in Modern Arab Literature Part II Al-Said Al-Waraqi (Kurdia books, Beirut)

Readings on the Last War in Lebanon (Central Information Office of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, 1983)

Jews in the Quran Sheikh Salah Abu Ismael (Abd al-Nur Charitable Society, Kuwait)

Development of the Palestinian Cause Fatmeh Abdel Majid Farahat (Higher Council for Culture, Egypt, 1981)

Lebanons' Wars Fiteen Ahmad Farid (Dar al-Atwa Press, Cairo, 1983)

Jews in the Quran Mohammed Ahmad Daraouseh (Islamic Books, Beirut)

The Jewish Serpent in Islamic Strongholds Abdallah Tal (Islamic Books Beirut, 1982)

Islam and the Challenge of the Modern Degeneration Munir Shafiq (Taha Publishing House, London, 1983).

Does Reagan Have Post-Election Plans for Middle East ?

For two months prior to US presidential elections, particularly in re-election years, visits by world leaders are normally discouraged because the president is busy campaigning. The only foreign dignitaries allowed to meet the president are those the president can exploit for his campaign. In this context, President Reagan had plenty of time to see Soviet foreign minister Gromyko and Israel's prime minister Shimon Peres, while no time to meet Lebanon's prime minister Rashid Karameh.

The meeting between Reagan and Gromyko was important as his first tete-a-tete with a high level Soviet official during his four-year tenure. Meeting Gromyko allowed Reagan to shrug off accusations particularly by his Democratic opponents, that he is a war monger. It was also very well-timed: a month prior to the US elections and only days before his major televison debate with his challenger, Walter Mondale.

Reagan's decision to meet with Israeli leaders, both the prime minister and foreign minister, was well orchestrated. He intended to demonstrate to US Jewry his unwavering commitment to Israel. Reagan's refusal to meet with Lebanon's prime minister Rashid Karameh was also beneficial allowing Reagan to demonstrate displeasure over Lebanon's rapproachement with Syria since Karameh took over as prime minister. It was also designed not to remind Americans of Reagan's disastrous policies in Lebanon which have led to the deaths of some 260 Americans in less than two years.

Israel, which knows full well how things are run in the US, customarily uses the eve of US presidential elections to make some of its toughest requests or demands from its American friends. This helps explain why Peres and Shamir rushed to Washington soon after forming the national unity government. Indeed, Israeli officials have made clear their belief that Reagan and his administration would likely be more responsive before, rather than after, the elections.

Normally, both the president running for re-election and the opposing presidential candidate go out of their way to appear as Israel's best friends. On the eve of the 1980 presidential elections, Israel was able to wring out of the Carter administration a document committing the US to Israel's energy security by specifying the provisions that would activate the March 1979 US-Israeli oil memorandum. The Israelis intentionally dragged on negotiations until a month prior to the November elections. In fact, Walter Mondale, then vice-president, finally announced the deal at a fundraising function of Jewish voters.

At the time, Reagan, then the Republican Presidential candidate, was also anxious to win Jewish support and thus went on record as not considering Jewish settlement in the occupied territories illegal despite stated US policy since 1967 which views the settlements as illegal and an obstacle to peace. Reagan also attacked the PLO as a "terrorist" organisation, saying that even if it were to embrace UN Resolution 242, he would "still want to know whether they represent the Palestinian people they claim to represent."

In this current presidential election, Walter Mondale, now the Democratic Presidential nominee, declared at the end of September in an interview with representatives of the Jewish press in the US that if he is elected president he will "never" pressure Israel and will not try to convince "moderate" Arab governments to participate in peace negotiations by selling them arms, implying that this is what the Reagan administration has been doing.

Under normal circumstances, the Democratic nominee is usually Israel's choice mostly because the majority of American Jews are Democrats and their influence in the party is tremendous. Hence, given Mondale's unequivocol support of Israel and the fact that he would be a first-term president if elected, which usually implies he would be more susceptible to Jewish pressure, one would assume he was Israel's first choice. Israel, however, publicly pursues a policy of "neutrality" preferring to maintain influence and ties with both presidential candidates and, at the same time, tries to squeeze out of both as much support as it can.

Hence Israel hurriedly sent both its prime minister and foreign minister to Washington. Few entertained doubt that they would leave the US empty-handed. Instead Reagan agreed to an aid package of US $2.6 billion, although Peres wants more. It looks as if Peres will get most of what he wants.

Neverthless, the Reagan administration has recently undertaken a number of interesting and somewhat unusual steps construed by Israel's friends in the US as unfriendly to Israel. Reagan appointed a prominent Arab-American, Joe Baraudy, former president of the National Association of Arab-Americans, as head of the Republican party's liaison office with minorities, including Arab-Americans.

Reagan, despite his vehemet attack of the PLO in his 1980 campaign, also did what few presidents would have dared to do. He tried in early October to introduce an amendement to the memorandum of agreement between the US and Israel initialled in September 1975 by Yigal Alon, former Israeli deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, and former secretary of state Henry Kissinger. The memorandum stated

The United States will continue to adhere to its present policy with respect to the Palestine Liberation Organisation, whereby it will not recognise or negotiate with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation so long as the Palestine Liberation Organisation does not recognise Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The amendement Reagan wanted introduced was an addition to the statement reading: "Unless the President of the United States explicitly agrees to such negotiations and informs the Congress of them." This was promptly rejected by Israel's friends in Congress, not to the surprise of the Reagan administration.

What is surprising, however, is Reagan's timing on the eve of the elections and Peres' visit to Washington. Clearly Reagan feared little the repercussions that his proposed amendment might have on Jewish voters. In contrast, in 1979, President Carter dismissed his UN ambassador and a key black vote mobiliser, Andrew Young, for holding a meeting with the PLO's representative to the UN, Zuhdi Tarazi. Also in March 1980 Carter went to the extent of disavowing the Security Council Resolution condemning Israeli settlements for which the US had voted.

In another surprising move, Reagan threatened on October 4 to veto the Foreign Aid Bill if a section stipulating that the sale of weapons to Jordan be linked to its joining the peace process was not dropped for the text. Political observers indicated that this intervention by the President would undoubtedly succeed in eliminating that section. Reagan stood firm, as well, on his refusal to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem despite the adoption on October 2, by two House sub committees of a non-binding recommendation that the embassy be moved to Jerusalem. An aide to the President asserted, however, that, "The president will not move the embassy in Israel regardless of congressional action."

Even the Syrians perceive a surprising change at this time in US attitudes with regards to Lebanon. According to Syria's foreign minister, Farouk al-Shara', the US now distinguishes between the Syrian and Israeli presence in Lebanon viewing Israel as an occupation force while seeing Syria's presence as legitimate. Syria's foreign minister also indicated that the US supports an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and accepts giving UNIFIL a role in Security arrangements for southern Lebanon.

These somewhat bold attitudes adopted at an unusual time, just a month prior to the US elections, underline Reagan's confidence in his re-election bid. According to a recent *ABC News — Washington Post* survey, Reagan is leading in 48 of the 50 states, and not since before 1960 has a challenger been so far behind in the polls as Walter Mondale. Reagan is, therefore, in the unusual but privileged position of being in no need of the Jewish vote.

With his re-election bid assured, his generosity and support for Israel demonstrated, and a seemingly less hostile attitude toward Arabs evident, could Reagan be setting the stage for a new policy in the Middle East? Could he be paving the way for a serious re-inviguration of the dormant "peace" process? Does his attempt at amending the US-Israeli agreement over the PLO imply that the US is finally convinced of the centrality of the PLO to the Palestinians and the need to have it play a role in future peace negotiations?

It is premature at this time to predict whether Reagan has post-election plans for the Middle East or not? What is certain, however, is that in his second and final term in office, Reagan can afford to exert pressure on Israel, particularly with the latter's acute economic vulnerability, to arrive at an accommodation of the Arab-Israeli conflict; but the qustion is, will he?

The Dawn
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AL FAJR — Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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No Return to Square one

Israeli officials gave permission last week to a group of Nablus businessmen to open a bank with branches all over the occupied territories to deal in Jordanian currency. Israeli papers commented that the move is part of Shimon Peres's "gestures" to the population of the West Bank in accordance with earlier requests by US officials.

News reports are circulating that the Israelis will open Najah University (ordered closed for four months by the Israeli military on August 1, 1984) before the end of the closure order — again as a good gesture by the new Israeli government coalition headed by the Labour Party Chairperson Shimon Peres.

Earlier other news leaked out on Peres's intention to ease pressure on the local Palestinian press, hinting to the possibility of altering regulations of censorship and other forms of harassment against newspapers, magazines and mass media. Actually Peres intervened personally in early October in the case of the Jerusalem-based *Palestine Press Services* and cancelled an attempt by the previous government to close that office.

Rumors are also current among West Bankers that steps towards increased economic ties with Jordan and setting up power bases for economic control by Jordanian allegiances in the occupied territories are being discussed and seriously studied by the new Israeli government.

All these steps blossoming from west of the West Bank are complimented by simultaneous moves east of the West Bank: Jordan controls the export of agricultural products from the occupied territories and the steadfastness funds which were supposed to be jointly supervised with the PLO and distributed to help the economy of the West Bank and Gaza. These also help tighten the control by pro-Jordanian elements over the economy in the occupied territories.

The depressed economic situation that the Palestinian population in the West Bank live under now is the creation of the tandem control of the West Bank by Jordan and the Israeli occupation since 1967. An attempt to show that the Israeli Labour Party's return to power means the start of solving the Palestinian problem is in direct contradiction with the facts: that Israel under Labour Party rule occupied and corrupted the West Bank to begin with.

Superficial changes whether positive or negative do not change the nature of the occupation. Struggle against control of the Palestinian population and the land is the main issue. Israeli occupation must end; Jordanian control must stop. We won't be taken back to the Labour Party era in the early 1970's, when Jordan and Israel worked hand-in-hand to repress our people. The 1976 elections changed that relationship and showed our people's revulsion of the Hashemite regime. We won't go back to square one.

Brzezinski Says Arabs Missed Camp David Boat

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington, DC Correspondent

Zbigniew Brzezinski served as President Jimmy Carter's assistant for national security affairs from 1977 to 1981 and was one of the top American officials who took part in consummating the Camp David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli 'peace' treaty. His latest book covering his service at the White House, *Power and Principle*, (1983), is a valuable resource for students of American domestic and foreign policy during the Carter years. The full text of the interview with Brzezinski, conducted by *Al Fajr's* Washington correspondent Ghassan Bishara and made on September 5, 1984, will be published in the fall issue of *The Journal for Palestine Studies*. Following are excerpts from that interview:

Q: Now seven years after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, do you believe the visit of President Sadat would have been more productive had the Israelis not understood it, as they apparently did, as a reflection of a weak Arab stand and a weak Arab front and that Sadat should have bargained his way to Jerusalem with both Americans and Israelis?

Zbigniew Brzezinski

A: I don't think Sadat could have bargained his way to Jerusalem. He went to Jerusalem because he realised that the process of bargaining was in fact stalemated. In that context, he had the choice of either rejoining the Arab front — which would perpetuate the *status quo* — or of reaching out on his own in order to unfreeze the *status quo*. Looking at the problem purely from the Egyptian national interest point of view, the second alternative was clearly better. After all, Sadat got back for Egypt everything that he wanted and, I can tell you very frankly and truthfully, much more than the Israelis were inclined to give even in the very first phases of the Camp David deliberations.

I am quite convinced that the Israelis were hoping, even in the context of a separate bargain with Egypt, to retain maybe Sharm al-Sheikh, certainly the air bases in the desert and, maybe, some special arrangements for the settlements such as Yamit. So Sadat got back much more than the Israelis initially thought they would have to pay for a separate deal. Whether from a larger and broader Arab point of view it would have been better for him not to go is, adm[illegible]lebatable.

My view still is, however, that the wiser strategy for the Arabs would have been to try to get the peace process moving forward beyond the Israeli-Egyptian accommodation. The United States under Carter was certainly prepared to join in the effort and even if Begin had then deliberately sabotaged the peace process, the Arabs would be in a much better diplomatic and political position than they are today. My guess is that he would have found it difficult to sabotage the process altogether and therefore the Arabs would have accomplished at least some progress in gaining more human and political rights for the Palestinians.

Q: Dr Brzezinski, what I really meant by "bargaining his way" is — considering that Israel had wanted Arab recognition for a very long time and that when Begin took control of the Israeli government, the impression to the outside world was that Israel was willing to accept UN Resolution 242 as territory for peace — what I am saying is, had President Sadat made it clear that 'yes, I would go to Jerusalem, but before I do, what are you willing to give me before I do the utmost thing that is expected of any other Arab leader, to go to Jerusalem and speak to the Knesset?' That is really what I meant. Do you still stand by your position?

A: My answer still stands because that would have meant going back to the negotiating process and, in the final analysis, I think one has to recognise that then, and even now, there was a very major gap between what the Arabs considered to be the substance of peace and what the Israelis considered to be the substance of peace.

Q: In return for returning the Sinai (which, as you said, has no particular historic or religious meaning for Israel) Begin achieved the neutralisation of Egypt as the most powerful Arab country and maintained the Sinai as practically a demilitarised zone.

A: He achieved that but one has to recognise that Mr Sadat also achieved what he wanted, which was the restoration of full Egyptian sovereignty over all of Sinai. That meant eliminating the humiliation of Israeli political and military presence on Egyptian territory. Whether more could have been accomplished — it is still my view — depended in large measure also on the degree of Arab imagination in being skillful and energetic in exploiting the diplomatic openings which the Camp David accords created. Had the Arab side been willing to join in the process of creating what was called autonomous institutions for the Palestinians in the West Bank, it would have been very difficult for Mr Begin to obstruct the process, though I have little doubt that he would have tried to obstruct it.

Q: You did mean that President Sadat achieved most or all of what he wanted on the Egyptian front but he did not really achieve the rest of what he came to Jerusalem for — that is, the West Bank and Gaza.

A: Mr Sadat's performance, I think, would have been quite different if instead of condemning him, the Arab leaders had been willing to join him. The problem with Arab policy toward Israel has been that it is largely rhetorical and declaratory. The Arab side has never been serious either about fighting or about nego-

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AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

PNC, Jordan, National Unity:

Local Editors Look at Current Topics

by Said al-Ghazali

Editors of newspapers and political magazines in the occupied territories were interviewed this week by *Al Fajr* weekly on current issues facing the PLO and on the convening of the 17th Palestinian National Council. The seven editors expressed differing understandings of the concept of national unity — whether and how all factions within the PLO should work together — although all verbally supported the Aden/Algiers agreement of July 1984 as the basis for Palestinian organisational unity. There has not been an atempt since the Aden meetings to de factionalise their respective publications meaning their personal preferences and political stands are often published to the exclusion of other political viewpoints.

The editors held three distinct views on circumstances under which the PNC should be convened: immediate convening with or without all PLO factions; postponement until a comprehensive agreement including all Palestinian factions is reached; and convening without all factions in the event national agreement negotiations fail.

The political document made at Aden regulates Palestinian relations with Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and recommends a national unity front in the occupied territories. The organisational paper points out the need for wide-scale reforms in PLO institutions including the PNC, the central council, the executive committee, the popular unions and other institutions. A third document dealt with the comprehensive national dialogue among all Palestinian factions based on the agreement itself and in preparation for convening the 17th PNC session. The agreement also stated in a front paper that if comprehensive national dialogue up to September 15, 1984 is deadlocked, the signatories will meet again to implement the article of the agreement and prepare on their own for convening the PNC session. The terms of the agreement, however, are vague and subject to interpretation: for example its condemnation of violence to resolve internal disputes is regarded by Arafat loyalists as a condemnation of the Fatah dissidents' battle in Tripoli but by others it is a condemnation based on the principle of democratic dialogue and not civil war.

The fact that the PNC has not yet convened has engendered sharp debate among Palestinians in the occupied territories as well as among PLO factions outside. The local newspapers are sharply divided over this issue and over the recent resumption of diplomatic relations between Jordan and Egypt.

Local editors expect that political disputes will escalate if the PNC is not convened in the coming weeks. But inspite of their serious call for the PNC a different understanding of the PNC's objectives comes through in the pages of their publications, as well as in their interviews. Some editors perceive the PNC as an objective in itself to activate PLO institutions by drafting a political plan for the future. Others find in the PNC a historic opportunity to create a collective leadership for the PLO. Some editors also want the PNC to levy political and organisational punishments on those who used violence to impose compulsory solutions for conflicts within the ranks of the revolution, that is to openly condemn the Fatah dissidents. Others want the PNC to discuss more thoroughly the issue of Yasir Arafat's 1983 visit to Cairo which Fatah and the Democratic Alliance in the Aden Agreement called "a bypass" of the PNC resolutions.

The seven editors agreed on the role of the PNC as the Palestinian supreme parliament which determines Palestinian strategy and action in the coming period. All expressed the view that the failure of the PNC would cause a split within the PLO and intensify the political differences among Palestinian factions. This would lead to a real catastrophe which could kill Palestinian national aspirations of the right of return, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. But how to avoid this catastrophe? The editors answer vaguely that maintenance of national unity and commitment to the Aden/Algiers agreement is the only way.

Local Demands from the PNC

Editors say that residents of the occupied territories want genuine national unity and they call for supporting Palestinian steadfastness on a new basis. They demand that PNC members work on ending the occupation by implementing a national salvation plan.

Bashir Barghouti — *Al Talia*

Bashir Barghouti, *Al Talia*' weekly newspaper editor, said a pre-condition for the convening of the PNC should be a clarification of the Palestinian stand in regard to Jordan resuming diplomatic relations with Egypt.

Akram Haniya — *Al Sha'ab*

In contrast to Barghouti, Akram Haniya, *Al Sha'ab* daily newspaper's editor, was in favour of the immediate convening of the PNC to determine the Palestinian position and to draw up a plan which, he said, should "take into consideration the balance of forces in the area which is witnessing a militaristic, diplomatic and political assault led by international imperialism, Israel and most Arab countries." Haniya also demanded an overall evaluation of the Palestinian situation since the departure of PLO forces from Beirut in 1982 and said those responsible for the attacks on Fatah loyalists in the Beqa'a and Tripoli should be punished.

Mahmoud Khatib — *Al Mithaq*

Mahmoud Khatib, owner and editor of *Al Mithaq* daily newspaper which is the voice of the nationalist opposition in the occupied territories, listed several goals for the PNC, which could be convened only after completing a comprehensive national agreement. He said that PNC members should be re-selected by a special committee representing all PLO factions, that the composition of the PNC should be specified according to each faction, and independent members selected on the basis of agreed upon criteria. Also the authority of the PLO executive committee and its chairman should be specified, financial issues monitored, a collective leadership created, PNC meetings regulated and decisions made in a decisive way regarding Arab and international political initiatives.

Hanna Siniora — *Al Fajr*

Hanna Siniora, *Al Fajr* publications' editor, said that the PNC role is to "make a plan for putting an end to the Israeli occupation, to give a comprehensive analysis of the Arab and international political situation and to issue courageous decisions." Siniora said that PNC decisions should not be consensus but taken in accordance with the principle of majority rule with the minority endorsing the decisions. He added the political differences should not "paralyse the PNC and the executive committee" elected by the PNC.

Ibrahim Qara'in — *Al Awdeh*

Ibrahim Qara'in, editor of *Al Awdah* magazine published by the Palestine Press Services, shared Siniora's opinion. Qara'in said, "They — the PNC members — must find the means of salvation for the people of the occupied territories. A national salvation plan must be reached."

Walid Assali — *Al-Shira'a*

Walid Assali, editor of the closed *Al Shira'a* weekly magazine, said that the PNC is not in itself an objective, rather national unity is the objective. "I demand that the PNC back the steadfastness of our people on a correct national basis and not use factional criteria." *Al Shira'a* was closed down in August 1983 by the Jerusalem commissioner Rafael Levy on political grounds, for "associating with an illegal organisation."

Jack Khazmo, editor of *Al Bayader*, a weekly magazine, expressed confidence in the current Palestinian leadership for its "well-matured political awareness" and said, "The legitimate leadership can deal with the current political issues." Khazmo expressed his hope that the resumption of relations between Jordan and Egypt should not cause a stumbling block towards convening the PNC. Khazmo predicted that Palestinians in the occupied territories would be bound to translate national unity into practice.

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'No Reason For Us To Be Here'

Israeli soldiers and officers have worked alongside their surrogates, the South Lebanon Army, supplying, training and carrying out joint operations against the population of south Lebanon. The following article by **Michael Gertti**, speaking for an Israeli company commander in the SLA, was written after the massacre of villagers in Suhmur. It points out the corruption of the SLA and how the Israeli army is suffering from its collaboration.

Antoine Lahad, SLA commander: *"scared of driving around at night."*

South Lebanon Army in training: *"If anyone treated my mother the way they treat some of the old women from Hiam at checkpoints, I would take a gun and shoot them."*

...My letter wasn't supposed to be a prophetic forecast. I thought that as long as we were with them there wouldn't be a massacre. I just wrote that we can't rely on them and that in time they'll make things difficult for us. All this talk about the SLA being the only way to bring our boys back home has always seemed to me to be dangerous. "Lahad needs a year-and-a-half in order to gain control of the south..." What a load of crap! The day after we leave his whole army will fall apart and all that will be left will be a bunch of warring gangs. You should see the way they're stockpiling arms and munitions. And when it comes down to it, who joins the SLA? I'll tell you who — the cream of the riff-raff, the ones who have neither work nor property and want to make money fast. And believe me, they make money! Not from their salaries; they make money by taking bribes and collecting all sorts of 'taxes.'

Aside from the money they get by way of the system, which goes into the B Fund of the units, they also collect 'direct taxes.' The worst of it is that it's all being done in our name. When an SLA soldier collects 'tax' at a border checkpoint, he always swears that it's not for him; he tells his victim that "the Israeli officer takes it all for himself." And we're talking about a lot of money — hard cash. It's true that some of our boys have done similar things but they're few and far between. The real 'protection racket' is being operated by the SLA. We don't back them up when they rob people at checkpoints but they have other means at their disposal. Squealing, for instance. They feed us information about somebody and then tell the villagers that the Israelis are behind the whole setup.

Easy Money

The Shi'ite *mukhtar* of a small village invited me to his house for a cup of coffee one day. He looked very old and he told me stories about the days when the French army was in Lebanon. "You know," he said to me, "we Lebanese have never been fond of the army. We've always considered armies to be a waste of time and money. But I think that as soon as you leave, things will change. The young men will want to sign up now that you've shown them how to make easy money."

They would never give up their salaries. That's the basis of it all. Once an SLA division in Juya just packed up and went home when their salaries didn't arrive on time. The whole matter of recruiting Shi'ites is pretty strange — sometimes it seems as if they've received the blessing of the local leaders. Maybe the reason is that they're afraid they'll be the only ones without arms if they don't join up; they are worried about what's going to happen when we withdraw. Or maybe they join up in order to learn how to be soldiers — that way they can teach their friends in the Amal militia everything they've learnt from us. What's wrong? Didn't the Haganah send people to the British army for similar reasons?

The union between different ethnic groups in the SLA is pretty limited. The policy is to let everyone serve together — it's a united Lebanon, right? But deep down there are groundswells of hatred that we just can't imagine. Just look what happened in Suhmur. My company is strictly Christian. They've always spoken about everyone else with contempt. They see themselves as the 'Europeans,' the cultured ones, but when it comes down to it their culture is spread about as thin as a coat of aftershave.

I also wrote to you about how their mentality can take root among us. It begins with the black market; the SLA soldiers buy the Israelis whatever they want. Give an SLA soldier US$10 and he will bring you a transistor radio. How are you to know whether he paid for it or walked into a store in Sidon, in uniform and fully armed, and simply took it off the shelf? Then there's barter; it's usually a matter of trading Israeli army property — like uniforms or foodstuffs — for all sorts of different things. But as soon as somebody has traded a package of meat for a carton of cigarettes and a bottle of arak, he's in trouble with the army and can be pushed to steal a bit more next time.

Like Sabra and Shatila

Right now it looks as if none of you are going to make a fuss over what happened in Suhmur. Why don't you hold a demonstration of 400,000 people? What's wrong? Do you think Suhmur is less worthy of being investigated than Sabra and Shatila? This time it won't be so easy to weasel out of it. What will we say: 'we weren't there' or 'we didn't know'? After Sabra and Shatila nobody can say 'we didn't expect it.'

I've heard stories about the killers avoiding the roadblocks and sneaking past the sentries. Listen, they came in cars; how could they have skirted the roadbocks? Who are they trying to fool? If Suhmur was under curfew then it would have had to be hermetically sealed, so that nobody — not even if they'd crawled on their hands and knees — could have gotten out. I've also heard something to the effect that we should have held an inquiry into what happened. Look, general Lahad didn't arrive on the scene till 8:30 am — and what did he say? He said that he wasn't a platoon or company commander. If the four dead soldiers and the five other wounded ones had been Israeli, a general would have been on the scene within half-an-hour. If you ask me, Lahad was just plain scared of driving around at night.

When I told my father about what I thought had happened in Suhmur, he told me something interesting. He said that what I had told him wasn't very important. He thought that the really important thing was what one of the prisoners had said to Ehud Yari. He was very impressed with this prisoner. It reminded him of his own activities during the days of the mandate. He talked about himself and your late father and about the patrols and ambushes the Haganah used to carry out. After the operation, everyone would go home and have a glass of hot tea with their wife. And everyone who belonged to the Haganah was considered a freedom fighter struggling against a foreign occupier. And the whole country backed them up and no one turned them in. The gang from Suhmur had been operating for over a year! And they caused the Israeli army quite a bit of trouble before they finally decided to set up the SLA.

Although I'm a lieutenant, I'm still young — I haven't had my twenty-second birthday yet. I went to the SLA after they convinced me that it was the best way to help my friends out of Lebanon. True, it's mostly because of my Arabic — but they didn't force any of us to go. In my neighbourhood there are only two other officers, and I thought: "Hell! I'm here already; why not go where I'm needed?" But if I had known what I was getting myself into...

"I read that a lot has been written about the SLA's 'Lebanese tactics' — as if that's what is holding the population on a tight leash and preventing attacks. What bullshit! The only thing it does is force a few more people into the underground every day. And they're getting more sophisticated; we're leaving them no choice."

A Population on a Leash

I read that a lot has been written about the SLA's 'Lebanese tactics' — as if that's what is holding the population on a tight leash and preventing attacks. What bullshit! The only thing it does is force a few more people into the underground every day. And they're getting more sophisticated; we're leaving them no choice. Of course it's the occupation; but more than that, it's the SLA. If anyone treated my mother the way they treat some of the old women from Hiam at the checkpoints, I would take a gun and shoot them. Almost all of the attacks against the Israeli army and the SLA over the past few months have been carried out by Shi'ites — the overwhelming majority of them are local people. Someone ought to check how many of them were jarred into action by the rifle butts of the SLA.

Like the prisoner they interviewed on TV, said: "Why are you still here? The terrorists are gone." That's exactly what I wrote in my letter. Here, I have it with me: "Before Operation Peace for the Galilee we didn't know about what was happening in Lebanon. We heard lectures but the only things I remember from them are about terrorists and casinos. But now I've become an expert on the extent of our ignorance. There's no reason for us to be here. Absolutely no reason. Any normal person from the West — or even someone from the oriental community — just cannot fathom what is taking place before our very eyes. Right now it's the Shi'ites who are causing the violence and only they can put a stop to it; they're the only ones who can ensure peace and neighbourly relations in the future."

Did you write it all down? And here — take the letter. I'm going home. My mother is worried. She thinks that your house is being kept under surveillance and 10 policemen are copiously writing down the names of everyone going in or out. One more thing: my father asked me to remind you to light a remembrance day candle on the Day of Atonement. He said that he'd light one at our synagogue. OK, I'm going to go. Have a happy new year and drop by when you get a chance. (Translation: HaAretz, September 26, 1984)

Two-and-a-half years ago, following Israeli legislation annexing the Golan Heights, the refusal of the Syrian inhabitants of the Golan to accept Israeli identification papers set off a stormy public debate in Israel. Confronted by a siege, their food supplies cut off, they established public committees and distributed food among themselves. Anyone found to be collaborating with the authorities was boycotted. The Israeli-Syrian prisoner exchange in June brought the Golan Heights back into the headlines when 12 of the prisoners released from Israeli prisons returned to their homes in the Golan.

Recently the Israeli legal advisor threatened to stiffen prison penalties for any expression of solidarity with Syria. *Derech HaNitzotz* writers **Assaf Adiv** and **Peter Weiner** visited the villages of the Golan on September 22–23 and wrote down their impressions.

The Syrian Golan:
A Long Tradition of Struggle

Father talking to son in Syria across the Israeli line in the Golan Heights: *"In Majdal Shams, megaphones are very much in demand."* **/AV photo**

There are four Arab villages on the southern slopes of Jebel al-Sheikh (Mt. Hermon) in the north of the Golan Heights: Majdal Shams, Masadah, Bukatah and Ain Kinya. The houses on the outskirts of Majdal Shams are a scant 50 metres away from the cease fire line with Syria. 7500 people live in the village, set in the pastoral landscape of the Golan Heights. But the peace of the mountains is regularly disturbed by people talking to each other with the aid of megaphones from opposite sides of the border. Families that were arbitrarily split up at the time of the 1967 conquest, hold regular over-the-border-conversations. So it is that in Majdal Shams, megaphones are very much in demand.

Likewise, on the other side of the border, there is a Syrian water pipeline, but the inhabitants of Majdal Shams do not have access to it and are forced to rely on Israeli water supplies; this is symbolic of the tragic situation in which the Arab inhabitants of the Golan Heights are caught.

The 15,000 inhabitants of the Golan are living testimony to the fact that inspite of the annexation law and the settlements, the Golan is Syrian-Arab territory. The attempt to foist Israeli citizenship on the inhabitants, the prohibition on studying in Syria, and the restrictions on family visits have all failed. The inhabitants of the Golan have remained steadfast in their attachment to their homeland and their Syrian-Arab nationality. No matter whom we spoke to — be it young men in the central square of Majdal Shams, the university students and graduates who belong to the newly formed academic association in the village, road workers working in Masadah, or villagers from Bukatah — all agreed: "We are Syrian Arabs and we will not give up our nationality under any conditions." Two years after the end of the strike, the inhabitants of the Golan remain firm regarding their principles and are not prepared to retreat from them.

The enthusiastic reception given to the 12 political prisoners from the villages upon their return home after a lengthy period of imprisonment was dramatic proof that the overwhelming majority of the population of the four villages identify with the struggle against the Israeli occupation and see themselves as part of the Syrian nation; ("98 percent of the people are nationalists, 1 percent are foreign agents, and 1 percent are undecided"). The reception turned into a celebration of the villagers' identification with their Syrian homeland; the Syrian national anthem was sung as were many patriotic songs. We were fortunate enough to see a video film shot on the day the prisoners returned to the villages; as they flashed V-for-victory signs, the villagers stormed past the police barricades to hug the released men.

We saw the film at the home of Adel Abu G'bl in Majdal Shams on Friday afternoon along with twenty other people who had come over to meet us. The majority of them had been in an Israeli prison at one time or another; in the Golan Heights this is something of a mark of honour. As the discussion got under way, Adel Abu G'bl — one of the leaders of the struggle in the Golan — said that he had nothing to expect from the new Israeli government. "Occupation is occupation," he said. "As regards the Arab problem, the stand of the Likud and the stand of the Labour Alignment are identical. 75 MKs from both parties voted in favour of annexing the Golan Heights."

Nor is he optimistic about an agreement to end the Israeli army's presence in Lebanon. "What Israel needs is a significant change in both policy and the overall direction of the state. The Israelis must come to understand that they are living on the lands of the Palestinian people; until the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland is recognised — there will be no peace." As regards Kahanism, Salman Fakr al-Din — one of the younger leaders — remarked that it was "the legitimate offspring of the 35 year existence of the State of Israel."

MILITANT HISTORY

Majdal Shams — Saturday morning. We visited the home of Sheikh Mahmoud Safdi, known as Abu Adnan to one and all. He is one of the outstanding leaders of the Golan Druze, a man with moral authority, who told us the history of his people's continuous struggle against foreign rule. "The history of our community is part of the history of the Muslim nation," he said. "We sparked off the rebellion against Ottoman rule." In 1925, Sultan al-Atrash led a rebellion in which 126 men from Majdal Shams met their deaths in a battle over a *wadi* that took place in Rashiya Lebanon. "We will not be any less courageous than our forefathers or less steadfast in our allegiance to our homeland," he said. Abu Adnan has been expressing the patriotic views of the inhabitants of the Golan since 1967. "We have opposed the occupation for 17 years," he went on to say, "and in our eyes, the annexation of the Golan heights is not legally binding. We are part of Syria and we have no doubt that the day will come when we will once again live under Syrian sovereignty."

He told us of how the 13,000 inhabitants of the Golan had faced 16,000 armed soldiers, fully equipped with armoured vehicles, tanks and planes in a war-like situation; he also spoke about how collaborators had been boycotted. In his words: "We have no financial or social intercourse with them. We do not go to their celebrations or their funerals; our children will not marry their children and we do not allow them to take part in our social life." Abu Adnan responded to one of our questions about the boycott by explaining that "in our religion, a man who goes against his people and betrays the goals of his co-religionists loses his place in the community." He went on to say: "If you go to battle and are wounded in the chest — you become a hero, but if you're wounded in the back — you're far from being a hero. For us steadfastness is of prime importance."

NO HOUSE DIVIDED

Abu Adnan rejects recent attempts to draw the Israeli Druze population into conflict with their counterparts on the Golan Heights. "There is an old ploy whereby communities are set against each other and families are divided, but we will not allow a split of this type to develop between ourselves and our brothers. Although we may have differences of opinion, we will never permit a situation to arise wherein we could face each other as enemies.

"We don't believe in the idea of an ethnic community or a family group. We are part of the Arab people and see ourselves as an indivisible part of it." Abu Adnan who was imprisoned during the strike by an administrative order, also praised the struggle of other people. "Udi Adiv, who is serving time in prison together with other political prisoners and is waging his struggle together with them, is no less my son than any of these young men sitting here. We are not against the Jews or for that matter against any people, per-se. We are fighting against occupation and repression. For us the oppressor is an oppressor and a human being is a human being. We want peace, but we don't equate true peace with surrender."

He concluded by saying: "The heart of the conflict is the Palestinian problem. It can be solved through the establishment of a democratic secular state or by the establishment of two separate states. But it must be solved if there is to be peace. Our struggle is a just struggle. We have a proverb to the effect that as long as our principles are upheld, they will never die."

The Israeli authorities create difficulties for the inhabitants of the Golan Heights in all walks of life. This has become even more obvious since the general strike. Family reunions on the ceasefire line are prohibited and high school graduates are not allowed to continue their studies in Syria. The educational situation is quite grave and many villagers complain that their children have to attend class in a stable. 47 pupils were expelled from the high school in Masadah — the only one in the Golan — because there wasn't enough room to accommodate them. The school is housed in an old building and the classrooms of grades eleven and twelve are located in rented rooms.

TAILOR SHOPS INTO SCHOOLS

The experience gained during the general strike has proved useful in dealing with other community problems. We spoke to a few workers who were fixing the electricity lines in a building which will become a tailor's shop when the present tailor's shop is vacated to make way for a classroom. Not only did the workers volunteer their time — the materials they used were donated as well. They told us that they were trying to give 47 pupils a chance to get an education.

The inhabitants of the Golan Heights pay income tax like all the other residents of the occupied territories and Israel proper and they also pay monthly rates to the local council. And yet, in spite of all the money they pay out, nothing is done to meet their needs. A year ago the villagers came up with a plan to build a high school in Majdal Shams. With the help of donations and voluntary labour, no budget would have had to be approved. An architect drew up the building plans according to the specifications of the Israeli Ministry of Education and all that was needed for the work to get under way was a formal authorization. But the Ministry of Education refused to approve the plan and that was that.

In the Majdal Shams junior high school there are 17 classes; 8 classes are conducted in the school building and the remaining 9 are conducted in a renovated stable which now serves as a classroom. Both primary schools in Majdal Shams contain 26 classes each; one school building houses 7 classrooms and the other 19 classes take place in rented stores; in the other, 13 classes are held in the school and 13 classes are held in rented stores. There is not a single school in the Golan — not even the Masadah High School — equipped with a library, a laboratory, or recreation and sports facilities. Moreover, many of the teachers are unfit to teach and only received their positions on account of their subservience to the authorities.

Another criticism often lodged is that the current curriculum hinders the development of the pupils. In 1967 the entire Syrian curriculum was thrown out and the one used in Israeli Arab and Druze schools was introduced in its stead. This curriculum relies on anachronistic teaching methods and blatantly disregards and even falsifies the traditions and history of the Druze inhabitants of the Golan Heights.

SYRIAN BROTHERS

Ali Abu Awad is a doctor who recently completed his studies at the University of Damascus and returned to Majdal Shams. "I had two reasons for going to study in Damascus," he said, "one financial and the other national. In order to study in Israel, one needs a great deal of money; it is difficult to be accepted, and one must cope with a foreign environment. But in Syria university studies are free and students from the Golan receive a government stipend of 400 Syrian pounds (IS50,000) every month. Also the authorities and the other students accept us in a fraternal spirit."

In response to our questions, Ali told us a bit about post-secondary educational institutions in Syria. "As regards educational standards," he said, "it's hard for me to say exactly, but the fact that my diploma — which allows me to practice medicine — is valid in Israel even though it was granted in Syria, reveals that Syrian students are up to international standards. I don't have to take any special tests to be able to practice in Israel." Ali Abu Awad went on to illuminate the scope of Syrian higher education: "There are four large universities and three more modest colleges in Syria. Two years ago, the University of Damascus had 70,000 students, the University of Halab — 7,000, the new university in Latakiya — 36,000, and the University of Hums — 40,000."

For two years Syrian universities have been closed to students from the Golan by a new regulation adopted by the Israeli administration following the strike prohibiting students from going there. Their single consolation is the possibility of going to study in the USSR. Every year 10 students are given scholarships to study in the Soviet Union, and the second group of 10 left for Moscow only a month ago.

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

In response to the neglect shown by the authorities to matters related to education and culture, a group of university students and graduates decided to establish an academic association. Set up 6 months ago, the association has been active filling in the education gap. We met some of the members of the association while they were busy restoring the cemetery at Majdal Shams. Taysir Marah'i, a graduate of the Haifa Technion explained: "The association was set up in order to give academics an opportunity to use their skills and talents for the good of the community. The association filled a vacuum by providing a framework for social and cultural activities. There may be only 1000 books in our library at present, but we intend to expand."

The aim of the association's centre is to aid pupils in all fields of study, especially matriculation and university entrance exams. Likewise, there are plans for workshops to be set up and for films to be screened. One of the projects of the association focuses on the restoration of the cemetery. One of the villagers donated some money and they volunteered their time.

Amira Ibrahim was toting two pails when we met her together with her comrades from the association. The mother of a five-year-old son, Amira is in her second year of architectural studies at the Tel Hai College in the Galilee. "I'm the second woman in the village to go out to study. There are probably many more who want to but can't," Amira told us. "There were pressures, but in the end it was up to me.

"One of our biggest problems is the absence of day care centres or nursery schools," she continued. "Parents are saddled with their children until they reach the age of five. Since my husband works as a tailor in the village, I was able to go to study." In response to a query regarding the conditions of women in the villages, she replied that since the strike women had taken a much more active role in the struggle. "There is no official cultural or social framework for women, but they congregate and take an active part in the life of the community." Amira also told us about the problems she faces as an Arab student from the Golan at an Israeli college. "When the Golan Heights are in the news, I'm looked upon as the enemy. But there are also students who say, 'You have a perfect right to your views, but we oppose you because that's how we've been brought up.'"

BUKATAH VILLAGE

Bukatah — Saturday morning. About 5000 people live here, the majority of whom are employed in construction work or at one of the industrial plants in Hatzor or Kiryat Shmona. There are also a few farmers who have small plots of apple trees. At Abu Iyub's house we met some of the villagers and as a tray full of apples was brought out, talk turned to the economic pressures exerted on the inhabitants of the Golan by the Israeli authorities. After the general strike, a good many construction workers who had been employed by Soleh Boneh were laid off; others lost the rights they had accumulated after a decade of employment. Israel's looming economic crisis worries them a lot. "We are the first in line to get laid off," said Abu Iyub.

The village of Bukatah lost two-thirds of its agricultural lands when Israel expropriated 13,000 dunums and turned them into minefields. The villagers' financial woes are much harder this year because of a disease which hit the apple crop. Farmers received no agricultural aid or advice on how to deal with the disease, and as a result, their apples can no longer fetch the price they once did. Prices have fallen drastically and the income tax authorities, failing to take this into account, want to collect the same sums they collected in years gone by. "We told the income tax clerks to come and see the apple orchards for themselves, but they're not prepared to leave their desks..."

Building is yet another problematic issue. The restrictions imposed by the authorities on the granting of building permits and the increased cost of Israeli building materials have prevented young people in the Golan from even thinking about building their own homes. They are not eligible for government aid nor do they have any opportunity receiving grants or loans. Whoever doesn't have US$25,000 can't even begin to dream about a home.

Even the water supply has become an issue for the inhabitants of the Golan, inspite of the fact that the area is blessed with many springs. Lately, drinking water has only been available for a few hours daily. "Before the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights," Abu Iyub told us, "we used to get water from Syrian springs which are now on the other side of the border; if the Israelis would grant us permission, we could get all the drinking water we need from the Syrians."

POWS COME HOME

Yusef Shahib Abu G'bl is one of the 12 prisoners released during the POW exchange. On June 28, the eleven-and-a-half years he and his comrades had spent in Israeli prisons came to an end when they returned to their villages. At present he is working for a building contractor in Majdal Shams. He gave us an hospitable welcome at his home.

"We weren't surprised by the announcement of our release," Yusef said. "We had seen it coming. We knew that we would be freed as a result of the negotiations held between Israel and Syria regarding the exchange of POWs. Three months before our release we began receiving letters from relatives in Syria that hinted at our impending liberation. We even knew that the POW exchange had been delayed for six months on account of an Israeli refusal to authorize our release — the prisoners from the Golan that is.

"But in the end Israel agreed to the exchange because the Shamir government wanted to score a victory before the elections; they wanted to free the three officers from their liaison office in Beirut who were captured by the Syrians. I'm sure you'll agree with me," said Yusef, "that those three officers were certainly not tomato vendors..."

The enthusiastic reception that Yusef and his friends received was over and above anything they had imagined. "We knew that we would be warmly received, but what actually took place was beyond our wildest expectations. The villagers came out en mass: old people, children, women and men; it was as though everyone had been personally affected by the struggle. Everyone wanted to shake hands with us, kiss us, and hoist us up on their shoulders. At first we refused but it didn't take long before we understood that we had no choice. We felt as if we had been released into the custody of the throng of villagers that met us. We began to note the changes that had taken place during our imprisonment among the inhabitants of the Golan Heights."

In 1973, when they were imprisoned, the people of the Golan were patriots, but the majority were inactive and paid scant attention to politics. That was at a time when the trauma of the 1967 war was still being felt; people tried to tread water and rarely revealed their true feelings. However, there were exceptions, like on the day Gamal Abdul Nasser died or when the authorities tried to force a local council on the villagers; somebody put two bombs in the square of Majdal Shams so that they could get an inkling of how the villagers felt about it.

But today, people openly express *their nationalist sentiments; every child* feels himself a part of the Syrian-Arab people. There have also been developments in regard to their perspectives on the Jews. People now differentiate between Jews and Zionists, and experience has taught them to differentiate between soldiers who are human beings and soldiers who are fascists; it's something that comes out in social interactions.

The inhabitants of the Golan have accepted a common fate and are engaged in a variety of co-operative ventures. The status of women has improved and they are now accepted as an integral component in social and national activities. The great change was brought about by the strike; according to Yusef, struggle is the best teacher. "You have to remember that we have a long tradition of struggle; liberty has real meaning for us. We know how it feels to live under independent national rule and that's something we're not going to relinquish." Eleven years in prison has not changed Yusef's outlook on the Israeli occupation and the Middle East conflict. "We left prison with our positions even more firmly entrenched. All the attempts to physically and psychologically force us to give up our political and national outlook only strengthened us in our resolve to resist.

"In prison we also learned that the struggle we are waging here is an integral part of a broader struggle. We met Palestinian prisoners and came to learn about the Palestinian revolution; we became acquainted with their political and ideological views and their different organisations. This experience had a powerful effect on us. Today we realise that there is a single revolutionary process taking place in the world and that our struggle is part of the universal revolution." (Translation: Derech Ha'nitzotz, October 1984)

Druze children at the border with Syria dressed up to talk with relatives on the other side: *"For us, steadfastness is of prime importance."* **/AV photo**

News Analysis

Beware: Don't Bet on Peres

by Bishara Bahbah

Mario Soares, Portuguese prime minister

Shimon Peres: *Friends in high places.*

Bettino Craxi, Italian prime minister

Over the past four decades, the fall of every year witnesses considerable foreign relations activity in most countries related to the convening of the regular session of the United Nations General Assembly. This year 159 countries are represented at the General Assembly together with a number of non-member observer countries and organisations. Most of these countries' foreign ministers pass through New York at one time or another during the General Assembly session, providing an ideal setting for concentrated diplomatic activity. One of the countries particularly active in the corridors and lounges of the General Assembly building is Israel, represented by its foreign minister and vice-premier, Yitzhak Shamir, and the newly appointed and supposedly 'brilliant' Israeli ambassador to the UN, Binyamin Netanyahu.

However, Shamir's presence in New York for three weeks is not the major reason why Israel is presently witnessing a flurry of diplomatic activity with foreign governments. The reason is rather the recent establishment of an Israeli 'unity' government headed by Shimon Peres, the Labour Party leader and well known figure in the Socialist International. In fact, most of the requests made to Israel's diplomatic missions around the world to meet with Shamir in New York have come largely in the aftermath of the creation of the unity government and stem from the curiosity of foreign ministers to see what new foreign policies will be adopted by the new Israeli government.

Already, Peres' ascent to the premiership has aroused considerable excitement among many countries, particularly Western European ones, who have expressed a willingness to improve relations with Israel. Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi sent a message to Peres indicating that his personal friendship with Israel's premier should lead to closer relations between the two countries. Portugal's prime minister, Mario Soares, who is a close friend and associate of Peres in the Socialist International, repeated in a congratulatory message to Peres his promise to open an embassy in Israel. Peres is even a close personal friend of Philipe Gonzales, prime minister of Spain, the only European country with no diplomatic ties to Israel.

The EEC was so encouraged over Peres' premiership that it hinted that with the establishment of a new government in Israel the time had come for EEC nations to take a more active role in the region. Even a country of peripheral importance to Israel, the Ivory Coast, has agreed to a meeting between its president and the new Israeli prime minister, despite the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the Ivory Coast's earlier refusal to meet with Menachem Begin when he was prime minister.

This sudden and almost worldwide interest in improving ties with Israel has clearly been the product of three main factors: (a) the coming to the premiership of Shimon Peres, who has very close personal ties with many world leaders; (b) the perception that Peres has considerable power to alter Israel's foreign policy; and (c) the perception that the unity government will be strong enough to adopt bold, new policies.

One has little control over the friendships of prime ministers. If Peres, on the one hand, and Soares and Gonzales, on the other, are friends and all happen to be prime ministers of their respective countries, it comes as no surprise that Israeli relations with Spain and Portugal show signs of improvement. Personal relations in politics should not be discounted. However, for Spain, Italy, Portugal, the Ivory Coast or the EEC to alter their policy simply because a friend of their leaders is in power is insufficient and somewhat absurd. Whatever disputes or differences of opinion exist between Israel and those countries, they have been based on policies and not personalities. Either the maintenance of such policies or their abolition is what matters. Hitherto, none of Israel's policies with regards to the Palestinians and the territories occupied by Israel have been discussed in the new unity government, let alone altered.

The perception held by many world leaders that Peres has considerable power to alter Israel's foreign policy is, more accurately, a misperception. Peres practically controls only half his cabinet and on critical issues, such as the occupied territories, does not even command a simple majority in the Israeli Knesset. This, of course, assumes that Peres' policies are what they used to be while he led the opposition. A recent editorial in the Israeli paper *Al Hamishmar* chastised Peres, among other things, for his fickle attitude toward the Reagan initiative. In 1982, Peres commented on the initiative, stating that it adopts the Alignment's attitude with regards to territorial compromises and the Jordanian option. Since he has become prime minister and now faces constant pressures from his more right-wing partners in the Likud, Peres has had a change of heart and tried to dissociate himself from his earlier position by stating, "We have blessed the initiative at the time but we have had reservations over its principles." Notwithstanding, Peres was easily coerced into acquiescing that Israel formally rejects the Reagan initiative since the national unity government has not discussed it or adopted any position on it. He merely said the previous government's rejection of the plan remains valid.

Finally, the perception that the unity government will be strong enough to adopt bold policies is only true with regards to two basic issues: Israel's troubled economy and a tentative agreement to withdraw from Lebanon. Beyond that, the two major Israeli parties are at loggerheads. Even Peres' modified attitude *vis-a-vis* the Reagan initiative is unacceptable to the Likud, his partner in government. And Peres himself has predicted that the national unity government will fall the moment the issue of the occupied territories is considered, even though the basic attitudes of both the parties from the Palestinian point of view are essentially the same.

It is very obvious, therefore, that many world leaders' assessments of the national unity government are premature, even with a Labour leader and active member of the Socialist International at its helm. In Israel, it is not who the prime minister is that really matters but rather who commands a majority in the Knesset. Although usually one goes along with the other, in this particular unity government, the prime minister commands a majority in the Knesset on only very limited issues that have little bearing on the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict — the Palestinian question.

Philipe Gonzales, Spanish prime minister

A Mix of Sweet and Sour at BZU Music Contest

by Daoud Kuttab

For many years music, as well as art, was not given its proper place in the Palestinian struggle and was looked upon only as accompaniment for military marches and rousing rhetoric. In recent years there has been more interest in developing the various arts, however.

For the first time last August a month-long artistic festival was held on the old campus of Bir Zeit University, the West Bank's leading institution of higher learning. The artistic celebration presented many with their first glimpse at leading groups in Palestine, particularly music troupes. The festival included contests in music, as well as theatre and dance. Six groups were invited to participate in each event, with cash prizes promised for the winning troupes.

From the start, festival artistic directors made it clear that they were looking for music groups who had a 'national commitment.' Although this term has never been clearly explained, it meant in the case of Bir Zeit Nights that only groups with a nationalist message would be invited.

Festival organisers had a difficult time in locating six groups that were able to give a concert up to 90 minutes long. Organisers had little information about existing groups as most Palestinian music troupes suffer from a lack of publicity. As a result, festival directors made a general survey of the groups available, including a history of the group, any press reviews and tape cassettes. By mid-April festival director Walid Abd al-Salaam had a rough idea about the available groups and sent invitations to Bir Zeit University's *Sanabel* group, *Rameh Choir* from the Galilee, *Nujoom Filastin* (Palestine Stars) from Jerusalem, *Shurou* from Ramallah, the *Palestine Folklore* group from Nazareth and Najah University's singing group. The last two were unable to participate in the festival: the lead singer of *Palestine Folklore* was placed under town arrest and the entire university of Najah was closed for four months by order of the military.

The Bir Zeit festival was sponsored by the BZU student council, the BZU student affairs office, the university administration and the Bir Zeit municipality. As far as attendence was concerned, the festival was a huge success. Every performance was jam packed, with many groups and spectators complaining of the crowds.

Music Education

One of the main weaknesses evident in the festival performances was the lack of music education and training. Qassem Abd al-Hadi, head of the Ramallah-based fine arts centre and a judge in the festival, said, "None of the artists know how to read music because very few study music." Abd al-Hadi said that the only place most people in Palestine hear live music is at weddings. "And that music is superficial and repetitive," he said, adding that at weddings people want to hear songs to dance to. "They obtain no musical knowledge from wedding music," said Abd al-Hadi. The problem facing Palestinian music is clearly seen when one realises that nearly all musical groups here fall into one of two categories. either the 'nationalist' troupes with lyrics but little musical training or the local bands used at weddings who can play instruments and read music but whose lyrics are only meant to entertain and stimulate dance.

Yousef Khil echoed similar sentiments: "Singers learn a few easy tunes, start playing them and, all of a sudden, they are producing a cassette." He encouraged singers and musicians to learn the basics of music and try to understand the various musical concepts and schools of thought before showing up on stage.

Speaking of stages, Abd al-Hadi complained that there are no places for music groups to perform in Palestine. Recently El-Hakawati Theatre in Jerusalem opened their doors to various performing groups but it has not been able to lead any kind of movement because of the inherent commercialisation involved. He said that you cannot develop a music movement here without many sacrifices. Again referring to El-Hakawati, Hadi said, "When renting a theatre for a music concert costs JD40, then music groups will not be encouraged to sing, fearing that they would not be able to make money from tickets."

Bir Zeit's *Sanabel* music group during better days in 1981. Among the study body no instrumentalists were to be found this year.

Instruments

Not only was the music educational level of the festival groups low but it was very evident that in Palestinian society we have few artists who have a command of either Western or Eastern musical instruments. In the performance of *Rameh's Choir*, only an organ and drum were used. In *Sanabel's* concert only drums were present and in the performance of the *Nujoom* group the guitar was badly out of tune during the entire performance with the lead guitarist playing wrong chords apparently without knowing it, according to judge Khil. When asked about the problem, Emil Ashrawi, director of *Sanabel*, explained that he couldn't find a single individual among Bir Zeit's 2000 students who could play any instrument. A number of students who had played instruments in previous years had graduated and no new playing students could be found.

Even instrumentalists who play in various pop groups today depend solely on learning by ear rather than by note. Mohammed Abukhater, who has taught music for the past 30 years, said that when he wanted a music teacher to help him teach, he couldn't find a single player from the groups that play in weddings to teach music by notes. The tragedy is also that few people in our society can tell if a musician is playing correctly or not, said Abukhater. "At weddings the drums are played so loudly and the microphones are turned up so that nobody can distinguish if the music group plays well or not," he said.

Melody

Some of the music groups performing at the Bir Zeit festival presented a number of new and original tunes. But, according to Abd al-Hadi, most of the songs were a repeat of popular musical scores and already well-liked by the people. Judges did note that new tunes were presented but that most of them were weak or strongly influenced by popular singers. The Lebanese tunes of Marcel Khalifa were repeated by every group. According to Khil, a number of groups tried to imitate Khalifa's style which begins slow and quickly gets faster. He said that the groups' aim was more emotional involvement than depth of musical score. Khil also noted that the idea of musical distribution and attempts to use all four voices in the choirs was rarely executed. He also complained of the lack of attempt to go back to original Eastern classics. Although *Sanabel* group tried to sing a number of classical *muwashahat* from the Andalus period, the study of these old oriental classics remains far from the reach of present music groups.

Lyrics

All the music groups performing in Bir Zeit paid more attention to lyrics than to the artistic level of the music. To a certain extent, however, the lyrics used by groups were a qualifying factor in order to receive an invitation. But a number of judges at the festival said at the end of the performances that the emphasis on lyrics was made at the expense of musical concerns. Yusef Khil said that the groups were more interested in receiving applause and stimulating nationalist emotion than in performing good musical pieces. He gave the example of the performance of *Nujoom Filastin*, where the lead singer repeated certain phrases with national connotations many times and improvised a lot, leaving aside the musical quality of the song. Abd al-Hadi said that good lyrics need good tunes. If you have great lyrics but a weak tune, the song will not be effective.

Music Contest

With the absence of two of the six festival groups, the music competition was no longer a contest. When the results were announced, furious debates took place between contesting artists and the judges. As announced at the end of the festival, the winning group in music was the *Rameh Choir*, followed by Bir Zeit's *Sanabel* group in second place. The announcement of the second-place winner brought lots of boos from the audience as many had expected *Shurouq* to get that prize. Although second-place winners receive no cash prizes, members of *Sharouq* group went to the various judges and tried to lobby to get them to change their minds. Festival director Taisir Massriah was very upset at the behaviour of *Sharouq's* lead singer. "Although I might sympathise with them, I don't feel lobbying as they did was proper," he said. Massriah said that by doing that they looked like bad sports. "Imagine," he said, "the feelings of the *Nujoom* group which would naturally be discouraged by being left out in last place. They, however, did not lobby for a change in the results."

For an activity held for the first time, the Bir Zeit festival was indeed beneficial and productive. Concern for Palestinian art and culture is long overdue and Bir Zeit must be commended for its action. However, the success of the first-year attempt can only be valued if we draw lessons from it and try to correct mistakes that were evident. Not paying attention to legitimate complaints about the festival would naturally lead to the mistakes becoming accepted as the norm. With the leading role Bir Zeit plays in education, their latest artistic project will naturally be copied by other universities and institutions. For this reason the repetition of the Bir Zeit festival experience can have a long-term effect.

If attention to professionalism and quality of any artistic work is not adhered to stringently, the state of musical arts in Palestine will retreat rather than advance. We have to learn that whatever political message we carry, it will have no weight if it is not supported by good and creative art.

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS

The victory of Palestinian prisoners at Jnaid, the difficulties facing PLO officials in calling a PNC session and the visit of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to Amman highlighted this week's press reports.

Local papers gave wide coverage to the protest strike at the various Red Cross offices and the general strike that coincided with the end of the hunger strike.

Difficulties in holding a PNC session were given prominence. Local papers quoted PLO officials who spoke of the possibility of holding the PNC in a non-Arab country. National opposition papers criticised the silence of Fatah regarding Jordan's move to re-establish relations with Egypt.

Jordan's Decision Isn't Just Internal

It is a great error for some people to think that the re-establishment of relations between the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes is an internal matter, especially when this odd justification comes from those who filled the world with their outcries about "unity of interests" and "unity of the two peoples" and "historical relations." These slogans they used as a pretext to drop national independence in favour of "unity" and even in favour of mandating the Jordanian regime to negotiate in place of the PLO!

Isn't this an obvious contradiction?

King Hussein reiterates constantly that he is a "partner" in solving the Palestinian cause. In his recent speech to the Jordanian parliament he announced in clear words that the decision to re-establish relations is to serve the "cause" meaning "the Palestinian cause." He also announced that he is ready for negotiations on condition that Israel accepts UN resolution 242.

If King Hussein does not consider his decision to re-establish relations with the Egyptian regime as a totally internal question, how can some people still maintain that this decision is an internal matter at the time when its maker says it has dimensions directly connected to the Palestinian cause and solving it?

If these gentlemen, who defend the Jordanian decision as an internal matter, still oppose the Camp David accords, why do they forget that the decision strengthens the Egyptian regime in holding to the accords and weakens the front opposing the accords?

Previously when Jordan revived its parliament it was said to be an internal matter. Later this was proven wrong and this was recorded in the Aden/Algiers agreement when the text said "rejection of the Jordanian step to revive its parliament and considering it a bypass to the Rabat Arab summit of 1974 aiming at reducing the right of the PLO to solely represent the Palestinian people." The agreement also stated "confrontation to any Jordanian attempt to participate in these plans" meaning the suggested American plans.

On this basis, those who explain that the Jordanian step is an internal matter violate the Aden/Algiers agreement before it is implemented. The Egyptian regime can use the same logic to prove that establishing diplomatic relations with Israel is an internal Egyptian matter.

The Jordanian regime did not resume its relations with the Egyptian regime for "internal" necessities dealing with its economy or for the need of the Jordanian ruling class for more Egyptian workers. All this was done before resuming diplomatic relations. The regime did that, as the Jordanian rulers affirmed themselves, in order to consolidate the political "coordination" with Egypt regarding "the Palestinian cause."

It is painful that some Palestinians consider this "coordination" as an internal matter that has nothing to do with them although it aims at determining their destiny and hits at their legitimate aspirations in return and an independent homeland.

A position like that shows political shortsightedness to say the least. To "confront the Jordanian attempts to participate in these solutions," — the American solutions — as it came in the Aden/Algiers agreement should not wait until the Jordanian rulers go to sign the agreements, rather it should be when any sign of such intention appears.

There are no more frank signs than those of reviving the Jordanian parliament and the decision to reestablish relations with Egypt and dealing with UN resolution 242 in isolation of any other former or later resolutions to solve the Palestinian cause, at the top of which came the resolution which recognises the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and set up an independent state.

Is not the definition of King Hussein that UN resolution 242 is the basis to solve the problem a flagrant interference in Palestinian internal affairs and a determination of their destiny?

The Jordanian decision is much more dangerous than the revenge of the Jordanian intelligence against those who oppose it. It is more dangerous than losing some bureaucratic gains due to confronting it. This of course is when we consider the national interest and commitment to self-determination occupy the same priority to these people as is the case with the majority of our people.

AL TALIA
October 4

Algiers Discussions

Discussions are to be held between PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and the Algerian president Shadli Ben Jedid. These discussions aim at exploring and evaluating the extent to which mediation efforts have reached regarding normalisation of Palestinian-Syrian relations.

We hope that the Algerian and Yemeni envoys had useful discussions in the Syrian capital and that they have returned with a positive Syrian stand indicating a change in the Syrian regime's attitude.

Should the Syrian response be negative, it should not be seen by some as an excuse to postpone the convening of PNC. The continuation of placing the Palestinian legitimate institutions hostage to the impulsiveness and blackmailing of any Arab regime means neglecting PLO unity and independence.

The Palestinian factions signatory to Aden/Algiers agreement are requested to renew their adherence to the agreement. They should reject any more outbiddings and blackmailing. They should go ahead and convene the PNC. Algeria, Yemen and all nationalist countries and forces will bear witness as to who thwarted the mediation efforts to reach a Palestinian-Syrian accord. The Palestinians, for sure, have never been an obstacle.

AL SHA'AB
October 5

The Sword of Law

Arab residents in the occupied territories were greatly relieved when members of the Jewish terror organisation were arrested, though too late, and only after the terrorists had succeeded in carrying out criminal acts against the Arabs and their properties.

Observers, Arabs and Jews, noticed the lenient sentences against members of the terror organization. The Israeli prosecution appealed the sentence against the terrorist who planned to demolish al-Aqsa Mosque. He was only sentenced to 15 months in prison.

Arab residents thought that terrorism against them had come to an end. But recurring incidents confirm that the threat to the Arabs is still here and strong. It seems that uprooting it is out of the question.

Following Kahane's tours in Um al-Fahm, his threat to enter Taibeh, his entering Dheisheh, and the incident that took place in Jerusalem 10 days ago leaving a number of innocent Arabs wounded, the terror phenomenon is drawing attention anew.

Violence and terror find a breeding place in the minds of fanatics and extremists who reject every chance for coexistence and peace. It is no use being tolerant and lenient toward such persons.

AL QUDS
October 6

The PLO: Inalienable Legitimacy

The attitude towards the PLO is our standard for judging the attitude towards liberation movements in the world. Any wavering of this attitude means a shaking of the whole standard. And any faltering in such an attitude is a faltering in the whole national vision.

Some of those shrouded in clouds of big "slogans" do not have such a deep awareness. They differentiate between one attitude and the other. They think they can be revolutionary while they are anti-PLO and its leadership, institutions and achievements. This is, of course, a wrong perception.

The Vietnam revolution at one phase was the standard for the national liberation vision all over the world. Then the Algerian revolution was the same standard at another stage. Today, it is the PLO that is the standard.

It is natural then that any attempt to obliterate this standard is necessarily an attempt to obliterate this stability and security of all the peoples of this area and the peoples of the world.

Those who claim that they are for peace, security and stability while at the same time splitting and dividing the PLO are deceivers and distorting modern history.

The PLO has been able to expose all attempts against it. Perhaps, what the PLO is experiencing with the regime of Hafez al-Assad will not be more difficult than its past experience with other Arab regimes.

The PLO, under the leadership of Yasir Arafat, will be able to overcome this difficulty and continue its march.

AL FAJR
October 8

Brzezinski

continued from page 5

tiating. Fighting once every 10 years for 10 days is not being serious about fighting and wanting the Americans to negotiate with the Israelis for the Arabs is not a token of seriousness about negotiating. My view is that if the Arabs, in one fashion or another, had been willing to join the process of negotiations which were initiated by Sadat it would have been very difficult for Mr Begin to sustain the stalemate regarding the Palestinian issue.

Q: Dr Brzezinski, I don't want to belabour this point but the fact is that the Egyptian president went to Jerusalem on behalf of the Arab people and he went to the Knesset saying, "I do not want a separate peace." In your book, you repeated that quotation. Unfortunately, he ended up with a separate peace. Had there been some signs that he would end up with more than a separate peace, the Arabs may have joined, don't you think?

A: Maybe, but maybe not. The fact is that by the time he signed a separate peace, the Arabs had made it absolutely clear that they were not willing to march down the road with him. He was alone. Therefore, his choice by then was either to admit defeat and to abandon the entire enterprise, which would have been probably politically devastating for him, or at least to get the best possible separate bargain for Egypt, which he did get, and leave the door somewhat open to a further, later accommodation on the Palestinian issue, which was indeed kept open in the Camp David accords. My point is that the Arabs, as often in the past and still today, prefer to sit on the sidelines and to talk rather than to be serious either about a war-fighting strategy or about a diplomatic strategy.

Q: Arab and non-Arab officials and intellectuals agree that with Egypt signing the peace treaty and the United States unwilling to interfere in the affairs of the Middle East, Israel committed certain acts which it otherwise would not have committed, such as annexing Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, the two invasions of Lebanon [1978 and 1982] and the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. Do you agree with such assumptions?

A: I would put it differently. The Camp David process certainly created opportunities for Israel to act unilaterally after the Camp David process had ground to a halt; in other words, Egypt got what it wanted and was out of the confrontation. But with the American administration under Reagan not pursuing the peace process and with the Arabs making it impossible for the peace process to be pursued, Israel then gained the free hand which maybe it had desired all along. It then used that free hand, essentially, for a policy of self-assertion as per the examples you have cited.

Q: Considering Israel's emphasis on neutralising Egypt, its lack of attachment to the Sinai for religious or historical reasons and the common effort you, President Carter, and other American officials spent on the Camp David accords, do you believe the experience can be repeated on the West Bank and Gaza and the Golan Heights? Would you recommend American leaders or Arab leaders to repeat the process, considering Israel's attachment to the West Bank and Gaza as part of *Eretz Israel*?

A: Yes, I certainly would because it seems to me the alternatives are worse for both sides. In the absence of the peace process, the Palestinian people are going to be deprived of their land; they will be dispersed and their future will be very bleak indeed. In the absence of the peace process, Israel will become a binational garrison state, condemned to live in a sea of hostility in a very unstable world in which technology is making the means of mass destruction more widely available. It is not an encouraging prospect, either from the Israeli or from the Palestinian point of view, not to speak from a more abstract geo-political perspective.

Q: With regard to the settlement as an obstacle to progress, who is right: the Americans, the Egyptians or the Israeli?

A: Well, you are asking a party to the debate. Obviously, I think we are right. In any case, what Mr Carter or what I or what Mr Vance have reported in our memoirs is our honest recollection of the facts as we recall them and as we understood them at the time.

Q: But, Dr Brzezinski, you are serious negotiators and you, intellectually, all of you, are masters, knowing or not knowing Mr Begin. Why wasn't this issue of Palestinian autonomy put down on paper?

A: It should have been, quite clearly. You have to remember that at that stage in the negotiations, which were really in a terminal stage, one had a considerable time pressure and one was trying to tie up certain loose ends and, last but not least, there wasn't an excessively strong Egyptian pressure for specificity on this issue. Accordingly, we thought we had a good faith understanding of what was involved and it simply didn't occur to us that such a fundamental divergence would surface so very quickly.

Q: So, from your point of view, therefore, Mr Begin committed himself and you agreed upon it but there was no need to put it down because you had to accept in good faith what you had heard.

A: Something was put down but the problem is that it was ambiguous as to what it pertained.

Q: Do you remember what was put down?

A: I don't have the exact wording but there is a reference to the duration of negotiations. The question is, does it apply to the negotiations between the Israelis and the Egyptians or regarding the autonomy? We thought it understood in the context of the discussion that it clearly pertained to autonomy, which would have meant for five years.

Q: If the administration or yourself, now as an intellectual, as a writer, want to disprove Mr Begin, do you have anything actually that you can point out other than [the good faith understanding and ambiguously-written reference]?

A: I don't think proving or disproving is the point. I think it is quite clear that a divergence arose immediately after the agreement. It is also a fact that at that stage, the Egyptians were more interested in completing the negotiations regarding the Sinai than having a new fight over the question of the settlements. The situation would have been altogether different if the Arab side had joined in the process. Then the question of how long Israeli self-abstinence on the settlements would last would have been quite central. But since the Arabs, in general, refused to participate in the process, the issue truly became of secondary importance, with the focus being on the Sinai negotiations.

Q: Realistically and maybe philosophically speaking, do you believe that neogtiations on issues of such intensity as those in the Middle East can be productive between two parties – the Arabs and Israel – with the balance of power so clearly in favour of one, that is, Israel?

A: That is a very hard question to answer. The balance of power in the short run may be clearly in Israel's advantage. But in the long, historical perspective, I would think the Israelis would be very concerned about national survival in a sea of presumably hostile Arabs. Therefore, I think that there is, in a broad philosophical sense, so to speak, a certain balance. It permits the Israelis to negotiate from a standpoint of self-confidence but it also permits the Arabs to approach the issue from the standpoint of historical confidence. What has been absent throughout, I think, has been any sensible Arab strategy for dealing particularly with the Palestinian problem. My view is that if one examines the Arabs' political as well as military strategy since 1949 and if one asks oneself how best to design a policy contrived to inflect maximum damage to the Arab side, one would probably do most of the things the Arabs have done until roughly 1973.

Q: As head of the National Security Council during a period in which intense activity was taking place regarding the Middle East, how powerful do you think the Israeli lobby in Washington is?

A: There is no doubt that the pro-Israeli lobby is a very powerful lobby, probably the most powerful ethnic lobby in the United States. Of course, there are other lobbies in America – economic, functional – but in terms of ethnic lobbies, the pro-Israeli lobby is probably the most powerful.

Q Is the statement that was attributed to you – "Bye, Bye, PLO" – a correct statement?

A: No, I was saying that the PLO was saying 'bye bye' to the peace process. I felt all along that we should try to talk to the PLO and I worked very hard to make that possible. Unfortunately, the PLO was insisting on conditions which made it appear that it was a great favour for the United States to be able to talk to the PLO whereas in fact if anything, it was the other way around.

Q The USSR stand in the Middle East having been weakened from the early 1970s, your objective in the administration was – and it still is that of the present administration – not to help the USSR back to the Middle East, or to help them, period. As an academician, however, and the former head of NSC, is it plausible or sound for the Arabs actually not to want to deal with the Soviet Union, considering their 'adversary's' close ties with the United States?

A: That is a complicated question and I would say that, of course, it makes sense for the Arabs to deal with the Soviets. But in dealing with Soviets, the Arabs should not entertain two very damaging illusions: one, that dealing with the Soviets will somehow make America deliver Israeli concessions to the Arabs. Far from it; if anything, if the Arabs deal too closely with the Soviets, they will help to forge an American-Israeli alliance which is precisely why some right-wing Israelis would like closer Arab-Soviet ties for it would then create a binding alliance with America, not against the Arabs, but against the Soviets, and indirectly, therefore, against the Arabs, perpetuating the *status quo*.

The second illusion is that the Soviets have a genuine interest in a solution of the Arab-Israeli dispute; they do not. The Soviets are intelligent enough to know that their influence in the Middle East is derived from the absence of peace between Israel and the Arabs because it creates opportunities for Soviet military and political involvement. Any genuine peace between the Israelis and the Arabs would inevitably produce such massive opportunities for the economic development of the region, for very special roles in the region, both by a Palestinian entity and by Israel, given the high level of education and technological know-how among these two peoples, that Middle Eastern ties with the West as a whole, and notably with the United States, would even further expand.

The Soviet Union, therefore, has no interest in peace in the Middle East. Therefore, if the Arabs want to play the Soviet card, they should at least be very conscious of the imperative need to avoid the delusion that playing that card will make America deliver Israel, or that playing that card will somehow encourage movement toward genuine peace. It will do neither.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Mr. Siniora,

On July 27, I visited you by arrangement made with the Israel Government Press Office. I was grateful that you made time to meet with me on what was obviously a very busy day.

Unfortunately, our meeting was interrupted by the appearance of Rabbi Hirsh of the Neturei Karta who explained some of his views to me. There was no agreement, whatsoever, between us and his views were and remain completely abhorrent to me.

In your edition of August 24, 1984, you carried a report of our meeting in which it was claimed that I agreed with some of Rabbi Hirsh's opinions and that I promised to support him. This report is completely untrue.

Leslie Caplan, A.M.

Editor's Note: The account of your meeting with Siniora and Hirsch published in *Al Fajr* August 24 under the headline "Diaspora Jews Meet PLO Supporters" was a direct translation from the Hebrew paper *Davar*, whom we presume received the story from Rabbi Hirsch.

Calendar of Events

October 13, 14

El-Hakawati Theatre. – Evening of Palestinian folklore with *Al-Fanoun Ash'abia* troupe from al-Bireh. 8:00 pm. For more information call (02)280957.

18, *El-Hakawati* Theatre – Film "Z" directed by Costa-Gavras. 8:00 pm.

October 17,

Silwan – Lecture and Film: on pregnancy, labour and delivery, by Jamieleh Qawasmi: 5:00 pm. Held at Silwan Athletic Club.

WEEKLY REVIEW

October 3, 1984

NEW MAYOR FOR RAFAH

RAFAH — The Israeli civil administration in the Gaza Strip has appointed pharmacist Suleiman Oaddeh Mohammed Zo'rub mayor of Rafah. He will replace the former mayor, Abd al-Hamid Qishta, who was assassinated last month.

October 4, 1984

YOUTH FINED FOR STONE THROWING

RAMALLAH — The Ramallah military court sentenced Mohammed Ahmed Sukieh a student to four months suspended plus a IS50,000 fine on charges of throwing stones at Israeli cars.

YOUTH FINED FOR SABRA AND SHATILA T-SHIRT

NAHARIYEH — The juvenile court in Nahariyeh sentenced Ibrahim Rushdi Salim, from the Galilee village of Ibilin, to an IS10,000 fine to be paid in three days on charges of wearing a shirt with the words Sabra and Shatila written on it.

He was also sentenced to two years suspended.

JERUSALEMITE IMPRISONED

LYDDA — The Israeli military court in Lydda sentenced Adel Saloum of Jerusalem to 20 months in prison plus another 20 months suspended on charges of membership in an illegal organisation, possessing a pistol and recruiting others to join his group.

TOWN ARREST LIFTED

UM AL-FAHM — Israeli authorities lifted the town-arrest on teacher Raja Aqhbariyeh from the village of Um al-Fahm.

Aghbariyeh is an active member of the Abna' al-Ballad nationalist movement.

October 5, 1984

BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE WILL NOT VISIT WEST BANK

The British secretary of state, Sir Geoffrey Howe, who is due to visit Israel later this month, will not visit the Israeli-occupied West Bank, sources in the British foreign ministry said. Sources said Howe may only visit the British counsulate in East Jerusalem.

NAJAH STUDENTS ARE STUDYING IN CAFE'S PUBLIC GARDENS

NABLUS — Palestinian students in the West Bank's largest city, Nablus, took to the streets — not to demonstrate this time — but to study and hold discussions in cafe's and public gardens pending the reopening of Najah University, *Agence France Presse* said in a special report from Nablus.

Najah University was ordered closed August 10 by Israeli military authorities after the army stormed the university and seized "inflammatory material" in a Palestinian folklore exhibition.

The university's 3500 students have been barred from sitting for final exams.

"The authorities want to make us strangers in our homeland, strangers to our education, but they will not succeed in suppressing Najah's voice," Adnan Milhem, head of the student council told an *Agence France Presse* reporter.

MK CALLS FOR DISSOLVING VILLAGE LEAGUES

MK Abd al-Wahab Darawshe, of the Labour party, intends to ask the Israeli government to dissolve the so-called village leagues in the West Bank because he says they have not achieved peace in the territories.

Darawshe said West Bank residents do not support these leagues.

9 WEST BANK YOUTHS FINED, IMPRISONED

NABLUS — The Nablus military court sentenced nine West Bank youths, whose age ranges between 15-16 years, to prison and fines on charges of throwing stones at Israeli military vehicles.

October 7, 1984

6 YOUTHS SENTENCED

Six Palestinian youths from the village of Mughier in the Ramallah district were sentenced to various prison terms on charges of membership in an illegal organisation, cutting a barbed wire fence surrounding an army camp, setting fire to an Israeli bulldozer and hoisting a Palestinian flag.

BOY KILLED, ANOTHER WOUNDED IN ISRAELI MINEFIELDS

JENIN — A Palestinian boy from the village of Ya'abad, near Jenin, was killed and a second boy critically wounded when they walked into a mine.

The wounded boy was taken to hospital in the nearby Israeli town of Afula.

LANGER PETITIONS HIGH COURT ON REUNION

GAZA — Advocate Felicia Langer petitioned the Israeli High Court on behalf of Nabhan Mustafa Yusef Umar of Gaza against the Israeli military governor and head of the civil administration, asking them to show cause why he is not permitted to reunite with his wife, Samiha Mohammed al-Muslimi, who is currently living in Morocco.

TAX FILES BURNED

HEBRON — Unidentified pesons broke into tax authorities' offices in Hebron and set several files and documents on fire. Police are investigating.

QALQILYA WOMAN AND SON STABBED

QALQILYA — Fathiyeh Samarah Umar of Qalqilyeh was seriously injured when unidentified robbers broke into her home. Her son, Yusef, was stabbed in the same incident when he tried to resist the robbers.

October 8, 1984

PETITION PROTESTS AGAINST YA'ABAD MUNICIPALITY

JENIN — About 200 residents from the village of Ya'abad signed a petition protesting against some activities of the municipality and calling for establishing rights and considering the public interest.

The petition, wich was sent to the Israeli administration in the Jenin district, also complained that several main roads in the town have not been paved.

SETTLERS HURL STONES AT ARAB CARS

RAMALLAH — A group of Jewish settlers from the settlement of Givo'n near Ramallah pelted Arab cars passing on the Ramallah-Nablus road with stones.

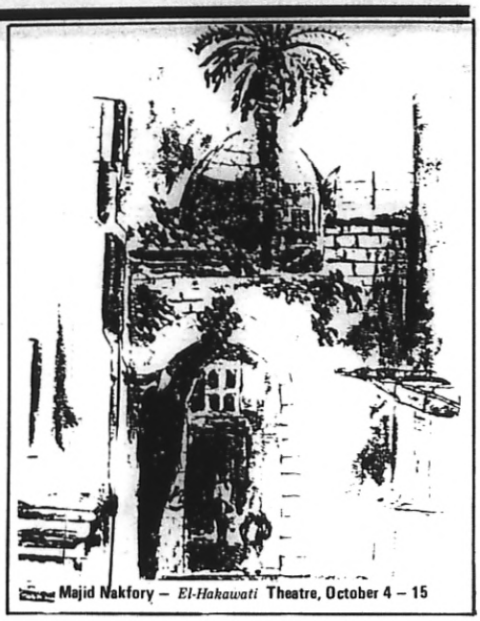
YOUTHS JAILED FOR SINGING

Nablus military court Monday sentenced Ayman Amin Taher, Nithman Yusef Mukbel and Khamis Kamel al-Shawahed from the village of Kufr Tal near Nablus to 14 days in prison and a JD25 fine on charges of singing national songs.

October 9, 1984

NAZARETH WORKERS DEMONSTRATE

NAZARETH — Dozens of Arab workers demonstrated in Nazareth to protest the Israeli government's economic policies. The demonstrators held placards calling on the army to withdraw from Lebanon and all the occupied territories. They also denounced the phenomenon of racist Kahane in Israel.



Majid Nakfory — *El-Hakawati* Theatre, October 4 – 15

COURT ISSUES INJUNCTION BANNING DEMOLITION OF 7 HOUSES

JABALYA — The Israeli High Court issued an injunction barring the military governor of Gaza and the head of the so-called civil administration from demolishing the homes of seven residents from the Jabalya refugee camp near Gaza on the pretext of "unlicensed construction."

The residents are: Jamal Taraseh, Mohammed al-Azouri, Khamis Ziyadi, Mohammed Taraseh, Na'im Taraseh, Zaidan Taraseh and Said Taraseh.

MILITARY TENT REMOVED

JALAZOUN — The Israeli army has removed the last military tent set up at the entrance of the Jalazoun refugee camp near Ramallah. The tent was set up after residents of the camp protested against conditions in Jnaid prison near Nablus.

JENIN'S DEPUTY MAYOR ARRESTED

JENIN — The Israeli-appointed deputy mayor of Jenin, Ibrahim Nasser, was arrested by police on suspicion of receiving a bribe.

YOUTH REMANDED INTO POLICE CUSTODY

NAZARETH — Atef Dahamsheh from the Galilee village of Kufr Kanna was remanded into police custody by the magistrates court in Nazareth on charges of setting fire to trees belonging to a Jewish settlement. He was arrested three weeks ago.

BOY WOUNDED BY BARBED WIRE

A boy from Dheisheh refugee camp was seriously injured in the eye after he got caught in barbed wire surrounding the narrow alleys of the camp.

The boy, Ishraq Abass Dagsh, was taken to the French Hospital in Jerusalem where he underwent surgery.

CALL FOR LIFTING TOWN-AREST ON AL QIDREH

Advocate Fayez Abu Rahmeh, head of the lawyers syndicate in Gaza, appealed to the objections committee in the Gaza military court to lift the town-arrest imposed on the head of the bar association Khaled al-Qidreh.

Al-Qidreh, a resident of Khan Yunis, was placed under town arrest at the end of last year. The order was renewed three times.

Abu Rahmeh said that the town-arrest had reflected badly on al-Qidreh and his family because his work and office are in Gaza.

DHEISHEH RESIDENTS FINED

DHEISHEH — Fathi Salameh, 22, and Mahmoud Elayan Abu Laban, 63, both from the Dheisheh refugee camp, were sentenced by the military court in Bethlehem to a IS50,000 fine on charges of violating the recent curfew imposed on the camp.

UM AL-FAHM YOUTH ARRESTED

UM AL-FAHM — Mohammed Mahmoud Gbariyeh of Um al-Fahm was arrested by police on charges of demonstrating and throwing stones two months ago during racist Meir Kahane's attempt to visit Um al-Fahm. Police say he was identified through pictures taken in the village on that day.

The Um al-Fahm local council began today an open strike until its financial crisis is solved.

The council warned against taking further "struggling" measures should authorities fail to meet its demands by next Saturday.

Sports: Rocky Roads

continued from page 16

referees and kills their spirit towards the games, particularly since they are also volunteers and earn about US$10 per game. Some games have even been cancelled or postponed due to fan interference.

Some athletic directors said fans want to see their team win no matter what. They said some teams and referees perform at much less than their capacity because they fear fans will attack them if the game tilts in favour of the visiting team. It one instance, a Jerusalem football team refused to play another West Bank club and agreed to concede points to that team because they feared players would be hurt in the game. The Jerusalem team was considered much better than its competitor and had no doubt that it would have won the game if played. In many games referees from the same town as the host team are asked to oversee games rather than bringing in referees from other areas. This reduces the chances of referees being attacked by fans. The social structure in the West Bank, in which families are often interrelated, can mean any attack against one member could cause a more serious family feud. Using local referees is also prefered because many fans could be related in one way or another to the referee.

With a nationalist government, a police force could be called to games to keep order, with fans who step out of line being properly punished. Several club owners in the West Bank refuse to involve the police who operate in conjunction with the occupation in athletic competitions for fear that this may create more tension. In addition, the absence of a nationalist government means the lack of a government-supported athletic institution to oversee sports like the youth institution in Amman. The AAC is trying to fill this gap but lacks the power to impose rules on clubs in the area.

One way the AAC is trying to deal with the problem of fan interference is to encourage clubs to educate their fans on the necessity of keeping order during a game. The club will be held responsible for fan actions and could be suspended from playing or lose points if fans interfere in the game. This, Adileh hopes, will deter fans from interrupting games. Clubs are also refusing to play in fields that are not fenced to keep fans from entering and attacking players and referees.

No School Sports

While athletic clubs are growing, sports in schools is dwindling. According to Masarweh, St George's has been trying to get schools to form some kind of a league to play against each other. This effort has not been successful and St George's has ended up playing individual games with some schools rather than having a tournament. It also plays university teams mainly because most of the players at the universities are graduates from the school.

Other schools do not show as much interest in sports, primarily because they have neither the facilities which St George's has — due to its proximity to YMCA volleyball and basketball grounds, and its own football field — nor the qualified physical education teachers. At one government school the physical education teacher admitted that he was given the job because he happened to be there and wanted a job. He said he played on the football team of a Ramallah club in the past and this may have qualified him to teach sports. Students of that school said all they do in the physical education class is run around the field and play football.

Even the time alloted for physical education in schools is minimal. Most schools give barely one hour a week for P.E. class and with 40 students in each class, activity time is reduced by half to find playing time for all the students. At government girls' schools, sports are often limited to internal activities. Classes compete against each other in sports like volleyball and no competition is held between the schools. Private schools, however, are usually more concerned with sports as an extracurricular activity. Some play other schools in football, basketball and volleyball competition.

Before 1967 there were only a handful of clubs in the West Bank. Jordan at that time had a policy against allowing clubs to be established, apparently in fear they would become a centre for anti-government activities. Israel's policy is exactly the opposite. Israel allowed clubs to be opened because it thought people would occupy their time in sports activities and stay away from politics. Only when a club has become politically active has the occupation government intervened and either closed it down or arrested its leaders. So far, most of the clubs with athletic teams have occupied themselves with sports.

The boost in number of athletic clubs in the West Bank has also been attributed to the media. Sports receives a good amount of coverage in the local Arabic press and many sportswriters contribute stories free of charge to the press. Samir Abu Jundi, sports editor of *Al Fajr* Arabic daily, said he asks sportswriters to contribute stories to the newspapers. He also attends games and reports on them. Occasionally the newspapers report on individual athletes and their contribution to sports.

The AAC hopes that with regular sports coverage and increased awareness by fans of sports ethics, games can progress and tournaments will be held on time. It also hopes that clubs will start paying attention to sports other than football in order to encourage a wide range of youth to join.

Current Topics

continued from page 6

JORDAN'S ROLE

Most of the editors interviewed considered Jordan's role in this phase to be important and strategic. Other editors reacted with reservation or sharply accused the Jordanians of interference. Khazmo demanded that Jordan back the Palestinian legitimate leadership by not circumventing the role of the PLO and pointed out what he called "a positive attitude" on the part of the Jordanian government in permitting PLO institutions to operate in Jordan.

Barghouti strongly criticised the role Jordan has played in the region since dialogue began between King Abdullah and Churchill, then the British secretary for colonial affairs, in 1921, up to the present date. Barghouti said that British imperialism gave Jordan the role at that time to prevent resistance against Zionist activities in Palestine, to prevent rebels' infiltration to Syria and to protect British communications in the region. Barghouti traced the Jordanian regime's policy toward Palestinians in the 1950s and 60s which became obvious during the civil war in 1970. Jordan eventually submitted a plan for a United Arab Kingdom both in 1972 and 1976, violating the agreement made at the Rabat summit in 1974 that the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. *Al Talia* editor concluded that Jordan is ready to bargain at the expense of the inviolable national rights of the Palestinian people and it does not hide its enmity to the Palestinian and Jordanian national movements.

Barghouti stood alone among the editors in criticizing Jordan. Other editors did not find Jordanian-Palestinian relations as negative. Some attempted vague diplomatic answers on the subject. Haniya conditioned Jordanian-Palestinian relations on the Fez Summit accords and on Jordan's recognition that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and said Jordanian-Palestinian relations are based on PNC resolutions.

Asked about the new Jordanian move of resumption of diplomatic relations with Egypt, Haniya mentioned a series of the latest political developments in the region: the formation of the new Israeli government, Ronald Reagan's declaration that his September 1982 plan is still alive, the resumption of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, the secret rapprochement between Syria, US and Israel, and Syria's stubbornness in regard to the convention of the PNC. He said that all these developments require the immediate convention of the PNC and the formation of a united Palestinian strategy.

Al Fajr's Siniora said that Jordan as well as other Arab countries are part of the strategic dimension on which the Palestinian people depend. Siniora called for formulating a comprehensive Arab plan which Jordan, Syria and the PLO would implement. *Al Mithaq's*, Khatib avoided open criticism of Jordan. After asserting the importance of relations between both peoples, Khatib said, "Because we are under occupation, talking about relations between Jordan and the Palestinians can only occur after liberating the land and establishing a Palestinian state." Similarly, Assali spoke of Jordan as committed to solve the Palestinian cause within the PLO framework and said that Jordan respects the independence of the Palestinian cause within the PLO framework and the independence of the Palestinian decision. Qara'in pointed to a recent speech by King Hussein which, he said, did not ignore "the Palestinian facts and the sole representative of the Palestinian people."

Occupied Territories' Role and the Issue of National Unity

All editors agreed with the simple principle that the occupied territories must play a positive role in maintaining national unity and not transfer disputes of the PLO factions to the inside. However, most residents would agree this has not been implemented practically.

The political paper of the Aden/Algiers agreement contains three articles: the first states that the Palestinian people in the occupied territories should be given every kind of support to strengthen their struggle; the second indicates that national unity must be protected in the occupied territories; and the third calls for the forming of a Palestinian national front according to the 16th PNC resolutions.

Commenting on the local role, Haniya said that the occupied territories will be the main arena of internal struggle in the near future. Haniya said that there is a political assault to create an alternative leadership in the occupied territories and "to impose liquidationist solutions." Haniya added that the occupied territories can not play an independent individualistic role, apart from the leadership of the PLO. Barghouti expressed a similar opinion on this point but added that the occupied territories has a special role. Barghouti stressed that the Aden/Algiers agreement must be implemented on the question of national unity in the occupied territories.

Assali, whose magazine was closed before the escalation of disputes within the ranks of the PLO, said that the occupied territories is the first line of defence in the front. It is possible to be either the strongest or the weakest line depending on the strength of national unity. Although other editors expressed similar ideas the main conclusion was that national unity in the occupied territories depends on Palestinian unity outside.

Role of the Palestinian Press in the Occupied Territories

Al Quds daily newspaper, which caters to the business community and is the most circulated paper, supports Jordan editorially.

Mahmoud Abu Zuluf, founder and editor of *Al Quds* newspaper, refused to talk with *Al Fajr* saying that he does not grant interviews with journalists.

On the role of *Al Fajr* newspaper in representing local views, Siniora said: "Since its establishment, *Al Fajr's* editors have focused on the Palestinian character, heritage, and national rights. The newspaper also reports on harassment by the occupation and the struggle to end the occupation."

Commenting on *Al Mithaq* newspaper which addresses Palestinian intellectuals and publishes more political essays, Khatib said his newspaper supports national unity. He reiterated: "It is part of the Palestinian people's right to know the negative and positive facts."

Haniya described the role of *Al Sha'ab* newspaper as adhering to the PNC resolutions and its articles. "Our editorials focus on national unity and the independence of the Palestinian decision," he claimed.

Barghouti said that *Al Talia*'s newspaper analyses the nature of the current struggle to include the various classes. The newspaper supports national unity among all these classes, he said, and criticised all negative aspects resulting from narrow factional views.

Jack Khazmo — *Al Bayader*

Khazmo said that *Al-Bayader* publishes the opinions of all Palestinians except those whose views contradict those of the legitimate Palestinian leadership.

Walid Assali said that *Al Shira'a* magazine served the Palestinian national line in a general yet independent way.

All editors of newspapers and magazines expressed their optimism that the Palestinian people would achieve Palestinian aspirations in establishing the state and in attaining the rights of return and self-determination.

Maher Abukhater looks at organised sports in the West Bank and the rough and tumble of competitions. No one to teach, no place to play, no room for spectators – but still the number of clubs grow and diversify.

West Bank Sports Travel Rocky Roads

Once upon a time, Palestine was a leading nation in Arab and international sports. Thirty-seven years after the 1948 war in Palestine the West Bank is trying to bounce back through attempts to reorganise sports activities at a professional level. The road, however, has not been an easy one and what has been accomplished so far can only be seen as remarkable in light of the problems the Palestinian people have faced.

The Association of Athletic Clubs in the West Bank (AAC) was established in the mid-'70s to "coordinate and organise athletic activities in the West Bank," according to spokesperson Ahmad Adileh. By the late '70s it organised football games among its member clubs, classifying them according to performance and ability. Now the AAC has 104 member clubs from all over the West Bank.

Football has long been the world's major sport, and West Bank clubs have been no less enthusiastic about it. Clubs have been formed devoted entirely to the game. Schools also use their physical education class once or twice a week for a football game between students and in neighbourhoods children are in the streets competing against each other for a goal or a skillful block.

Now that football competition is established among local clubs, attention is shifting towards other games: basketball and handball as well as table tennis teams are forming. A second annual basketball competition and the first annual competition in table tennis will be held this year.

Athletic officials interviewed cited several obstacles facing progress in West Bank sports. Lack of material resources and the absence of a nationalist entity are the main problems facing Palestinian sports. Without money, the quality of playing fields has deteriorated to a dangerous level. While international football fields are covered with grass, local fields are covered with stones.

"Our biggest problem is the fields," said Ramon Zabaneh, head of the East Jerusalem YMCA athletic department. "They are all filled with stones which makes it impossible to have any important activities on them." He said money is needed to repair and maintain the fields but neither the AAC nor the individual clubs or owners of the fields have money to do anything with them. Some of the fields are owned by high schools and others by municipalities. There is only one football field in East Jerusalem, owned by St George's Anglican school, which is used for all city games.

Atiyeh Masarweh, principal of St George's, and Ibrahim Attrash, sports instructor at the school, agreed that the fields are in poor condition but said that there is no way to improve them without having a regular budget to maintain the fields. Masarweh said his school is hoping to deal with this problem soon.

Most of the other West Bank fields are owned by municipalities, like in Nablus and Jericho. However, since the dismissal of the elected Palestinian municipalities in 1982, field conditions have worsened. The Israeli-appointed municipalities have neglected them and clubs in these cities have refused to cooperate with occupation forces in any matters, including sports, that may undermine Palestinian independence.

As a result, only one option is left for the AAC and that is to build fields in major West Bank cities in cooperation with certain clubs to be reserved only for regular season games. But without money, neither the AAC nor the clubs are in a position to build anything. Existing fields are regularly used by schools for physical education class and therefore no matter what is done to the surface, it soon wears out.

In addition to the bad playing turf, there are few spectator stands. As a result, many people, especially those with the ability to donate money to clubs or sponsor certain teams, do not come to watch games and remain disinterested in sports. Those who come to the games end up sitting on the concrete walls surrounding the field or standing up.

Attempts have been made to raise money from private individuals and institutions but not enough was collected. Most of the clubs' budgets go for transportation of players and referees and for organisation of the games. Revenue from ticket sales is not enough to pay anything. Tickets for Jerusalem games are sold for IS200. Usually more than half the spectators, who can reach almost 2000 for a good football game, enter the fields free-of-charge from holes in the fence.

Because money is scarce, players are neither paid regular salaries nor a stipend for each game they play, as professionals in most countries are. "All the players are volunteers," said Zabaneh. "We only pay their transportation fees and let them use YMCA facilities. They come to play because they like sports and competition."

It has been difficult for clubs to improve the quality of their teams because players are only part-time. They train once or twice a week for two hours each day and occasionally not all the players show up at game time. Some complain that during summer games, veteran players return home from work or study abroad and get to play while the regulars are left standing on the sidelines. This hurts the morale of regular players and causes some to leave their team in favour of another where they can get more playing time. This is usually the only time players move from one team to another since there are no real incentives offered to switch clubs.

Players also are often on the move based on their work needs. Many may be forced to work inside Israel for long hours, leaving no leisure time for sports. This creates a continuous turnover, which makes team playing difficult. Because of this, clubs have on their roster more players than they need, with several clubs having three times the number of team members fielded in case one or more leave to study or work abroad. Zabaneh said there is not much they can do about the problem since they cannot hire full-time players. He said the YMCA has a programme in which it trains 12-year-old boys and girls. Attrash, who also is a trainer for YMCA handball and a member of its football team, said the summer camps the YMCA holds for Palestinian youth are very helpful. He said the children get training in the camps and, as a result, become good athletes.

Lack of money is also a major reason for not travelling abroad to play foreign teams or bringing in foreign clubs to play here. Recently the football team of the Hebron Youth Club travelled to France and played against French teams. Silwan's football team also travelled to Amman and played Jordanian teams. Four foreign teams from Britain and the United States came to the West Bank in the early 1970s hosted by the YMCA and played several teams here; but no foreign team has been here since because of the high cost of hosting a team. All West Bank clubs also have a policy of not playing Israeli teams.

Some athletes complain that fan interference is a serious problem and has recently led to several interruptions. Ramzi Quteineh, a local football referee, said referees are always attacked by fans whenever a team loses a game. He said fans throw stones at them and blame them every time the competing team scores a goal. This endangers the lives of

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Roller skate handball at Deir Ammar summer camp, 1974.

Referees for Hilal Maqdisi club: *"Fan interference is a serious problem... referees are always attacked by fans whenever a team loses a game."*

Playing surfaces covered with stones, no bleachers for fans to sit in and poor fencing allowing non-payers to slip inside: *"Our biggest problem is the fields."*